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Some Values for To-day

OSCAR THOMAS OLSON

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To be my dear friends
the Mc Cutcheons,

Oscar Thomas Allen

SOME VALUES FOR TO-DAY

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OSCAR THOMAS OLSON

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FOREWORD

THE Matthew Simpson Lectureship Foundation was established by Mrs. Ella Simpson Buoy, Miss S. Elizabeth Simpson, and Miss Ida Simpson, daughters of Bishop Simpson, and others who sought to honor Bishop Simpson, the first president of DePauw University. The income from this fund is used for the support of a course of annual lectures on the Christian Ministry as a Life Calling. Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, Dr. Joseph M. M. Gray, Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, Dr. Merton S. Rice, Dr. Allen A. Stockdale, Dr. Ernest H. Cherrington, and Dr. Oscar Thomas Olson have been lecturers upon this foundation.

G. BROMLEY OXNAM.

DePauw University,
Greencastle, Indiana.

INTRODUCTION

THESE are high themes. They stimulate and lift the mind even before the discussion begins. They make us ashamed of any interest we may have in small and unworthy subjects. In themselves they invite serious thinking as a prelude and preparation for reading what is said about them. Even before any study of the lectures I found myself studying the chapter titles and trying to work out in my own mind a living and adequate conception of the valid world and all the rest.

It is a fine and a hopeful thing to have ministers grappling with themes like these. Many men hesitate and avoid them. Some seem to think that an effort to master large subjects especially overtaxes the mind. I think the psychologists are agreed that habitual thinking on small subjects causes more mental wear and tear than any other kind of mental activity. Subjects like these look toward mental and spiritual well-being. They are vital themes, every one bearing on life and related to life in its deepest meaning. By consideration of such ideas and principles wise men arrive at a philosophy of life. One real differ-

ence between the wise and the foolish is that the wise work away until they get a philosophy of life which covers and meets life's vital and total needs.

This is a worthy treatment of these high, vital topics. It has "spiritual glow," mental clearness and warmth, ethical passion and human helpfulness. Here is a fine endeavor to speak to our age, in our own tongue, the great things that God and his world, God and his Son mean to the men of to-day. Richard Harding Davis once told a young friend how to write. He said: "You can't tell an old story in an old way or a new story in a new way. Folks will be bored with the first, and won't get the second; at least for some time. The thing to do is to tell an old story in a new way or a new story in an old way." And that method or principle applies to discussions of religion which are expected always to bring out from religion's treasures what is new and what is old.

And this, I take it, is part of what Jesus meant by fulfilling earlier words than his own. It is this kind of discussion that performs that noble function of meditation, one of the most useful services ever rendered to men and women in our ever-changing human world. That was what William Newton Clarke had

in mind when he said that in times of transition, and even upheaval, we must keep an open mind as regards truth, a warm heart as regards men, and a living faith toward the ever living God. These studies will help in these bewildering days.

They have the glow of personality upon them. I do not mean simply the glow of the author's personality, though that is here. The glow of human life, the deep sense of the supreme meaning and value of personal life, the final value of truth for life, the worth of personality to the personal God, the world we live in as a valid home for men and women and children, and the eternal personal endeavor of the living God in behalf of the persons whom he creates and loves and desires to be like him and to be with him—that glow is here and that philosophy of life and religion is shining in these pages. And in these days of vast material development and overwhelming physical forces the soul of the world can be kept alive only by the religious philosophy that keeps personality at the center and on the throne. I count myself honored to be allowed to put these words into the front of this volume by one of the younger men in our ministry who in the Spirit see such visions.

WILLIAM FRASER MCDOWELL.

PREFACE

EACH man sees and faces the world anew, and finds something in it for himself. But he cannot separate himself from the disclosures of his fellows, nor can he divorce himself from the discoveries of his contemporaries. The living past moves into the stirring present and here each man must speak for life as he sees it. I believe that each man reflects that which has touched him in any vital way.

The following pages carry a series of addresses it was my privilege to give on the Simpson Foundation at DePauw University. They are a personal testimony to an effort to find some values for to-day that are reliable. They carry my own convictions, but make no claim to startling originality. I am more deeply indebted than I can express to the men and books whose acquaintance I have been privileged to make, and who, it seems to me, have spoken authentically to the spirit of man in terms of understanding and insight.

The days of the delivery of these addresses will always live for me as times of real happiness and rewarding fellowship. President G. Bromley Oxnam and the faculty and students

of DePauw University were unstinted in their cordiality and courtesy. My gratitude to them for the privilege of being a part of the University's life for a few brief days is deep and abiding.

I must not fail to express my thanks to my secretary, Miss Catherine Logan, whose efficient service has been an invaluable help in preparing the manuscript.

O. T. O.

CHAPTER I

A VALID WORLD TO LIVE IN

GILBERT MURRAY, in one of his essays, declares that the chief purpose of a religious interpretation of the world is to give to the soul of man a sense of liberty. "Man is imprisoned in the eternal present; and what we call a man's religion is to a great extent the thing which offers him a secret and permanent means of escape from that prison, a breaking of the prison walls which leaves him standing, of course, still in the present, but in a present so enlarged and enfranchised that it becomes not a prison, but a free world."

I want to raise a real question: Can we find a free world? Will this be a valid world to live in? Can we hold a religious experience that will not only fit into the world we are now in, but actually give worth and meaning to this free world? Can we stand amid the limitations and perplexities, the pains and tragedies, the failures and bankruptcies of life, not merely with stoical hardihood, but with a conquering sense of peace in our hearts, a victorious conviction of certainty in

our minds, and a shout of triumph on our lips?

We talk of truth, right, and God—are these real, or are they only pictures? Are these fact, or are they only "such stuff as dreams are made of"? Do the values we call goodness, truth, and beauty have solid validity, or are they only projected defense mechanisms against the flings of an outrageous universe? Is it true that the ideas that make up the material of religious thinking are figurative and fantastic, without any basis in fact? Or does Dean Inge have it right when he says, "The vitally important thing is, that we should believe in Goodness, Truth, and Beauty as divine and absolute principles, the source and goal of the whole cosmic process, and not as imaginings of the human mind, or ideal values that have no existence"?

Huxley once defined education as "the training of the intellect in the laws of nature, and the fashioning of the affections and the will in an earnest, loving desire to live in harmony with those laws." When we undertake to devise philosophies, to build religious interpretations, and to discover new sciences, let us not forget that we must have a valid world to live in to give meaning to the great and ultimate adventure of human experience.

Education, in its truest sense, is at one with religion in the conviction that the spirit of man needs only to be liberated and enlightened to know and serve the Spirit of God.

"There is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

I wonder if we will not best get at this matter by asking two or three questions. The first question is: Is truth the product of human thinking? In other words, is truth something which the human mind turns out, by the working of its intellectual machinery, in such a way that, if there were no human mind, and if there were no intellectual machinery, there would be no truth? Is truth a result that has been spun out of our own heads, a fortunate guess at what is real?

The second question is this: Is righteousness the product of human conscience? In other words, is righteousness something which the human conscience constructs by the working of its moral machinery, in such a way that were there no moral machinery, there would be no righteousness? Is righteousness a consequence that has come from the dreams of our own imaginings, lucky adaptations to surrounding circumstances?

It is well once in a while definitely to raise the question whether matters to which we give such dignified names as *truth* and *righteousness* have an existence in the very nature of things, a validity quite outside of man and altogether independent of him, or whether they are man-made, and are what they are only because we have decided to have them so. Are we dealing here with matters that are objectively real, universally valid? Do we behave like human beings simply because our mass of habit and custom has given us a funded experience that we agree in calling "truth" and "righteousness," or is the very structure of our world such as to give validity to these values?

There are a great many matters of practical and utilitarian interest in life that derive such importance as they have from the solidity of their setting.

". . . Naught avails
In science till the light you seize from heaven
Shines through the clear, sharp fact beneath your feet."

It is not enough to collect the facts and arrange the forces of our world so that they will be for us more effective instruments to help us travel faster through space and exist

more comfortably in time. Contemporary education has been tremendously successful in producing persons who have been quick and alert, skillful and successful. They have known more about radio activity than about the movements of life in the depths of personality. They have been more adept in building skyscrapers than in the art of creating character. They have counted more on pragmatic, calculable, bankable facts than on the hopes and dreams that bring "authentic tidings of invisible things." It is not to be denied that this realistic, scientific education has tremendously enriched life. It is not a matter of denying the worth of radio-activity, criticizing skyscrapers, or finding fault with that type of mind that insists upon drawing "the Thing as he sees It for the God of the Things as They are." We must learn to use the radio-active energies of our world, and to live in skyscrapers, and to control business; but we must also discover the meaning of this world that James called "a great, big, booming, buzzing confusion."

Education should be mainly concerned with the big undergirding realities, so that the immediate matters which lie so evidently close to life may have a fixed base into which to be mortised. It is of primary importance to get

a real answer to the question as to the nature of the reality that lies at the heart of our world. For our attitude toward matters of immediate, everyday experience is, in the last analysis, determined by our faith, or lack of faith, that we have a valid world to live in.

The third question is this: Are the principles of religion a human product? In other words, do the principles of religion have no guarantee, no existence in fact, save that which is secured to them by the play of human impulse? We want to know if our search toward the Eternal is a mere illusion. We want assurance that worship and faith and love are not vanities. It is not enough to tell us that, if we will only believe, we will be better men. We do not want to deceive ourselves here.

One of our contemporary truisms is: "Since religion is a human product, and since human nature changes, it is right to expect that religion will change." Men do change. The fact is undoubted. The times change and consequently the interpretation which men give to religion changes. But religion does not change.

The interpretation of truth changes, but truth does not change. The interpretation of the relation existing between the earth and

the sun is different from that of some hundreds of years ago, but the actual relation is the same in the day of Ptolemy as in the day of Copernicus, and in our present day of Eddington and Jeans. The relation remains the same; the construction or interpretation of the relation changes.

Our code of right is not interpreted as it was in the time of Moses and Sinai, but that does not signify that right as right has taken on a new character between times. To be sure, ethical problems in the midst of a mechanized, industrial civilization carry a complexity far more involved than in a simple, agricultural era. But the human problem is the same. It is the interpretation that changes. A few months ago one of New England's brilliant scholars gave a keen interpretation of "Our Dissolving Ethics." He points out, what we all see in our day, a lack of clear discernment as to what is true and what is right. He recognizes that the last generation played with great ideas and let loose forces of whose power we little dreamed. The present generation is out upon the way of life in a time when the road never has been wilder nor the signposts fewer.

Yet, if this is a valid world in which we live, then in ethics, as in mathematics, two and two

are four, and there was never a spot in the universe nor a moment in old eternity when they were not four. In ethics we have more complicated problems to deal with. Two lives plus two lives equal four lives, and this means complexity and adjustment, give and take. Ethics involves more difficulties than the most abstruse mathematics. What we are after is that which is valid in all relations of life.

If we conceive of education as a continuous growth of the mind and a continuous illumination of life, then we are constant seekers to resolve every formulation of life in terms of what is eternally true and right. It is not a mere intellectual interest that calls us to this task; it is the desire for ampler and more adequate living. The fact is, we are genuinely ambitious to get at what is basically fundamental in life. This is the only way by which we can live in that unchanging stability that permits us to be free.

There is more in life than a counting up of its details of everyday concern. We cannot add up all the details of our various activities and interests and call the net result life! We have not compassed the entire tree till we have burrowed at least a little way under ground to where the roots lie.

It is not quite enough to stop with saying

that such and such a proposition of philosophy or of science is true, and that such and such an act of conduct is ethical, and that such and such a form of belief is religiously sound. Even in house-building men do not stop with the soil that lies out on the surface; they probe down to what holds up the soil, and down upon that solid basis is laid the foundation upon which the house may be built. When the house has been put up in harmony with methods of construction as radical as that, then the family can move in comfortably, and sleep restfully, and live without fear. It is a matter of finding foundation.

We do not make the truth by our thinking; we only discover truth that is already in existence, whether or not it is sought after, and found. We do not make the blue vault of the heavens, nor the constellations with which it is inscribed, by turning our telescopes toward the stars. The spaces were there, and thronged with stellar lights, before time began. Our minds take the stuff of our world and make it over for our use, comfort, and inspiration. Mind is the immediate thing in our experience; what follows is inference.

The simple thing I am trying to do is to work our minds off on to the everlasting "ground of things," so that the steps of daily

life may have firm footing, and that beneath the loose and shifting soil we may have a sense of underlying foundation that is steady and compact.

It is of vast import to feel that in the things with which we are daily concerning ourselves the Eternal is coming to a more or less open disclosure. The dignity and value in common matters are due to so much of the Eternal as comes to expression in them. We need a sanctified imagination that can see beyond the mere mechanical processes of life. We need to find a cause, a quality of life to which we can give all our energies, and thus organize our personalities around a purpose that shares in the eternal nature of things.

We captain our own souls when we are under the sway of an ideal that draws out the deepest resources of our personalities. An ideal is a pattern idea, a picture of what we wish to be. Our ideals are our efforts to make ourselves at home in the world. It is when enduring things make the picture pattern that the ideal becomes compelling. Wordsworth has pictured this process for us:

"Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And gives to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,

By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear."

It is a responsiveness to the eternal and the permanent that gives us an assurance of a valid world to live in. This means that education must provide men and women who will cut their patterns from the validities of life. It is a tragic pity to cut good materials by a poor pattern!

We hear much about the importance of ideals, but not so much about the stern necessity of testing them in real experience. The dream of better ways of life is essential; the achievement of the dream is also essential. The test of a man is not in his glowing enlistment, but in the way he stands the march and the long campaign.

In *The Bridge of San Luis Rey,* Thornton Wilder paints an archbishop in whom the power to act in loyalty to his first high ideal had atrophied. Once the bad practice of his parish priests came to his attention, and "he

almost did something about it. . . . He trembled with indignation. . . . He announced that he was going to dictate an overwhelming message to his shepherds. But there was no ink left in the inkwell; there was no ink left in the next room; there was no ink to be found in the whole palace. This state of things in his household so upset the good man that he fell ill of the combined rages and learned to guard himself against indignations."

Not many men fail because of lack of talents or opportunity; many men do fail because they lack toughness of fiber to follow their dream. I know preachers who fail because they are not tough enough. A friend of mine since university days, a preacher, complained to me that he could not get anywhere. He got a bit provoked at me when I said: "You've got to take off your kid gloves when you go into the pulpit; put on some brass knuckles; deal realistically with life and thunder the fear of God. People will at least know you have been around!" He is a splendid fellow, with a fine dream for life, but not tough enough to see it through.

We must have men and women who will dare to dream of a better and a finer world than has yet been seen in our human story; and the dream must be wrought into life.

"Great it is to believe the dream
When we stand in youth by the starry stream!
But a greater thing is to fight life through
And say at the end, 'The dream is true!'"

There is infinitely more in life than we find in its separate and individual everyday details. And in the things of time there is present more of what already existed, before ever time was, than some of us have learned to realize. In fact, life, in its deeper elements, does not exist at all in what comes and goes with the years. The validities and reliabilities of life are found in what has no relation to the calendar.

Truth no more depends upon us for its existence than does the last star that is shining out upon the frontiers of infinite space. Truth asks that we be loyal to our sights and insights and transmit accurately our findings. Truth depends upon us for its construction and interpretation. There is no day when it began, neither will there be any year when it will finish. The findings of men differ; but, with the march of time, we believe that we are getting a finer and a firmer grip on truth. "We seek the truth; but if some voice told us that a few years more would see the end of our journey, that the clouds of uncertainty would be dispersed, and that we would discern the

whole truth about the physical universe, the tidings would be by no means joyful. In science, as in religion, the truth shines ahead as a beacon showing us the path; we do not ask to attain it; it is far better that we are permitted to seek."

All this is not a matter of abstract speculation. It is vitally related to the problem of living in our kind of a world. For the immediate world of men of which we are a part is under the direction of the democratic experiment. We are engaged in the process of discovering the capacities of men for self-direction and self-government. In this kind of a world the power of public opinion is almost omnipotent, and the test of any set of opinions must be in the amount of the eternal ingredient of truth that they carry.

Here we are dealing with a matter of immense practical importance. One of the characteristics of this careless and hurried civilization of America is its tolerance of various opinions—anything goes! It has come about that every man has an opinion on every subject under the sun. It is even seriously believed in many quarters that truth can be established by a popular election that might choose between various opinions. We have endless streams of talk without much wisdom

and light. Some of our commonwealths would legislate into truth, by democratic fiat, opinions concerning the evolution of our universe. Our opinions we fashion ourselves, and we commonly make rather bad work in the fashioning, which accounts for their discrepancy.

Truth, which is from eternity, and which is the only element that can give dignity and validity to an opinion, is often the very last element that enters into the construction of an opinion, and very often does not enter at all. I do not know of any expression more empty of wisdom and more crammed with folly than the very common utterance that every man has a right to his own opinion. So he has; but he has a right to something better than his own opinion—he has a right to the truth.

If a man says that he has the same right to believe that two and two are five as someone else has to believe that they are six, or that they are four, you set him down at once as a candidate for the school for the feeble-minded. Any intellectual frivolity is excusable in an idiot. One cannot have penetrated in the direction of the heart of things, or with any intelligence set out to find that heart, without realizing that it is absolutely idiotic to say

that every man has a right to his own opinion. If every man has a right to his own opinion, then the poor imbecile who claims that two and two make five has just as much right in maintaining the validity of his claim as the person who insists that two and two make four.

In either case he proceeds upon the assumption that truth and opinion are identical; that, whether it be called one or the other, it is man-made, a purely human affair, and an affair of to-day; that there is no reason, except in the convenience of things, why everything believed to-day should not be overthrown to-morrow, and something else substituted the day after. Life would mean nothing under such conditions. In such a world no validity could be found for anything. Every system of belief, whether related to science, to philosophy, or to religion, would become a mere castle in the air—nothing under it, nothing in it, and, therefore, nothing to it.

An opinion, in the honest and appreciative shaping of it, is an attempt to frame in form of human thought a reality that is so old and so new that its age can be measured only by the years that measure the age of God. It is solemn work; it is momentous work; it is important work. Only an honestly reverent

soul is fit to have an opinion, for only an honestly reverent soul can handle the eternal without sacrilege. Only a genuinely devout mind is competent to frame an opinion, for only a genuinely devout mind can interpret the divine without profanation.

Opinions change! There is nothing disturbing in that fact. Styles of architecture change, but architecture does not altogether change. There is an element in the architecture of to-day that was in the first hut ever thrown together, and that is because the first hut and every structure since were built after the ordinances of the universe and followed the lines of perpendicular and horizontal. Some of the great eternal original is in all of them. So opinion changes, but the truth in it does not change. There is enough of the indestructible, eternal ingredient in our opinions to secure a degree of continuity, and it is that element in them that gives to them their validity. So far as relates to the matter of opinions only, that which is from everlasting to everlasting constitutes the foundation of life.

In the element of truth eternity is already present with us. By so much as we have a grip upon truth we are living in an eternal world and breathing a divine atmosphere.

The first great thing that education should do for us is to give to us a sense of assurance that we have a valid world of truth to live in. We can live a life free of doubt when we are assured that the values that we live by are true and real.

Leaving this matter of truth and opinion, we move along our line of inquiry to another phase of the problem. Of the making of books that have to do with our changing morals there seems to be no end. We are being told with a perfect deluge of volumes, tracts, and magazine articles, that the whole ethical outlook of the world is changing.

If one ventures to oppose certain invasions that from time to time are made upon the territory of accustomed usage, he is frequently met by the excuse, or by the explanation—if that is a better word—that the times are changed, that people are not what they were a generation ago, that they have moved on to new ways of regarding questions of right and wrong, so that that which was once regarded as improper has become suitable and justified. There is something in this that to a cautious and conservative mind is very disturbing.

It is not to be claimed that the views entertained by the past generation regarding questions of moral conduct were infallible.

New times and new occasions do teach new duties and new approaches to both old and new relationships. A proper conservatism does not consist in standing just where our ancestors stood, in seeing what our ancestors saw, but in moving on a step and, while seeing all that they saw, pressing our vision beyond the point at which their vision stopped; not in having a new prospect, but a profounder prospect. This is what the Master Teacher said concerning himself: "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." Which is as though he had said, "I came not to destroy the bud, but to carry it forward into a blossom, along the same line of vivid and vital unfolding." That is a radical conservatism or a conservative radicalism. It goes clear to the rootage of life and takes the whole tree into consideration. There must be a vital continuity in life if the body is to grow and come to its glory.

The immediate difficulty that we are facing in our contemporary life grows out of the fact that men and women have only a blurred recognition of the fact that essential righteousness is very much of a piece with the eternal purpose of a living God. People do not clearly discern that the law of righteousness is implicit in the very nature of things. Essential righteousness is as distinct from

and unaffected by the shifting moral standards that men set for themselves as are the stars unbruised by the stones we fling at them, and undarkened by the dust we raise down here in our little earthly atmosphere. The validity of the world we live in depends upon the integrity of righteousness at its heart. If the universe walks with aimless feet, then our codes of decency are simply arrangements of comfort and convenience, without any enduring significance.

There are men and women who will refuse to admit—honestly so, probably—that they regard righteousness as a variable commodity: one thing to-day, something else to-morrow; one thing for themselves, and another for other people; one thing twenty-five years ago, another for this year. Nevertheless, it may still be the case that they are not so held under the pressure of the fact that righteousness is involved in the very structure of the universe —part and parcel of the very Being of the Eternal—as to keep them from adjusting their moral ideal to the requirements of their personal convenience, or to respond to the solicitations of their lapsing contemporaries.

We are all more or less the victims of the tendency to live as if the world had no validities of truth or conduct to fasten to. We

keep the forms of truth and conduct, but we cease to be controlled by their sanctions. Like the dollar, they may remain the standard of value; but just as our dollar to-day is worth only sixty-six cents in its purchasing power, as compared with the dollar of a generation ago, so our standards of value, that is, the purchasing power of our conceptions of truth and right in terms of happiness and human good, have suffered a tremendous depreciation. If we have eyes to see, the reason for this is not far to seek. We slip our spiritual anchorage, and then we wonder why life drifts onto the shoals. Or, to change the figure, we build our structure of life off the rock, and then, when the storm comes, we wonder why our house comes down. Or, to picture it differently again, we are like the old astronomers who, unlike those of the present, instead of solving the problem of the earth from the exalted outlook of the heavens, took this earth as the center of the universe, based on it their calculations, and constructed from it a system of astronomy that was distinguished for nothing so much as for its impenetrable confusion and substantial falsity.

If our ethical outlook is to be determined by our own personal desire and individual appetite, then we will find ourselves in a world

without any enduring validity. Only as we lift life to the style and manners of the sky can we escape the danger of being lost in the fog banks of our own lusts and desires. We do face the danger of allowing an assembly of information to outstrip the achievement of insight. If we are to have intellectual coherence and moral stability, we must have the conviction that the good of man does exist and can be realized. The motive of the heart, the spirit of the mind, determine the use to be made of the facts and forces of life. A certainty of righteousness at the heart of things is essential to a valid world to live in.

All that has been said here concerning the validity of truth and the integrity of righteousness applies to the certainty of religion. Granted that a mere sentence from the Bible can no longer be appealed to as affording a sufficient sanction for an ethical ideal or a code of conduct. Agreed that religion, as an institutional protection of inherited viewpoints, divided about inconsequential issues, is not equal to the needs of to-day. Already that type of religious expression is feeling the sting of defeat, fighting a rear-guard action. But religion in its real and living sense is broadening, deepening, and growing. The confidence by which men can live in the world of

to-day is not in a written confession of belief, simple and definite, and as lifeless as a mathematical formula. The faith that intrigues the interest of men to-day is the instinct to explore God, to discover his will for man and his purpose for the world. It is the conviction that the kingdom of God will be achieved as man moves toward the ideals of truth and righteousness in obedience to the laws of God. It is the movement of the soul, the urge of love, the fellowship of light seeking to build the kingdom of God in the affairs of man. It is living in the truth that the spiritual alone is real, enduring, creative, triumphant. It is working in response to the will of God, to so enlarge and enfranchise life that life will be lived not in a prison but in a free world.

Bishop Francis J. McConnell writes: "Christian duties change. The law of good will among men may call for one attitude and activity at one moment and for another in apparent contradiction at another moment. The revelation of the revelation in Christ may continue indefinitely. Christianity makes the claim that the holy love which Christ taught and lived holds true for God himself. All holiness and all love everywhere may be broken lights of that love. It is no more a sin of absolutism for the theologian to say that the

universe cannot escape from holy love than for the scientist to say that it cannot escape from reason."

Religion is our effort to realize the validity of the life of God in our world. Religion is our effort to make the holy love, the eternal and intelligent good will of God, real in our world. When we seek truth, our opinion of that truth will vary according to our ability to grasp the truth. When we seek righteousness, our conduct of that righteousness will vary according to our ability to grasp the right. When we seek God, our realization of that God will vary according to our ability to grasp God. Our idea of truth, our code of righteousness, our awareness of God are at best simply our human approximations of the truth, the righteousness, the God at the heart of our world. But here is our heritage: "He hath set eternity in the heart." So we live and work in the confidence that we are not meant for intellectual confusion, moral instability, and spiritual bankruptcy.

To have seen God's heart in the life of Jesus is enough to enable us to trust an infinite Goodness beyond our fathoming. We say with Paul, "Now I know in part," but the part that we know is so reassuring that we move on in confidence, certain that that which we do not

know is a part of a larger and finer world, where we can find all the validities of truth, goodness, and love regnant and controlling.

Unless all indications fail, we are at the place where an accurate realism will lead us to conceive of religion in terms of life, a more abundant life, a quality of life that is eternal in its power. As the past century saw a marvelous mastery of the material universe outside of us, so is it the opportunity of the present century to master the resources of the spiritual world inside of us. Whether our interest turns to the stars in the skies or the complicated astronomy of an atom, we are finding a unity binding this universe into a piece.

We are beginning to understand that the inner life has its unity, and as we discover its purpose and obey its laws we find ourselves in the presence of Him "in whose will is our peace." The validities of religion are not only forces in the human story; they are facts in the order of the universe. There is a bond between the starry heaven without and the moral realm within.

It is here, I believe, that we have a reason for the new and widespread interest in Jesus and his reading of the world of life. We are beginning to understand that what Jesus said

about the world and its life is true. He did not stop to argue the reality of truth, the worth of righteousness, the certainty of God. He lived as though this were a valid world to live in. He incarnated that truth that could say, "I am the . . . truth." He demonstrated that intelligent good will that could say, "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." He practiced the presence of God so that he could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Always he calls us to that personal loyalty to his way of life that will vindicate for us the validity of what he has to disclose. Venturing with him, we discover that truth, righteousness, and religion are rooted in the Eternal. In this adventure we discover that we do have a valid world to live in. It is a world that calls us to a high allegiance to truth, to a great obedience to the right, and to the daring of religion in mobilizing the spiritual insight of men to defeat ignorance and sin. Here is an enterprise big enough to command all that there is of us, an enterprise that will lift our fleeting lives into eternal worth and meaning.

This enterprise of building a valid world to live in may be delayed by the force and persistency of evil. We will not blind our eyes to

its amazing power. But our confidence of victory gets its assurance from our faith in Jesus and his way of life. We keep heart because he kept heart. God suffers no ultimate defeat. The chance rock in a mountain stream may deflect the water's flow. The mountain range itself may change the river's course. But neither rock nor mountain can keep the river from its destiny—the sea. God is not to be foiled. The march of his increasing purpose is mightier than all wrong. It may be that modern civilization has pushed religion and the spiritual elements of life out of the main stream of its development. We may be the witnesses of religion losing touch with vital social life. But this is only a temporary aspect. It can never be the ultimate condition of humanity. The vital and creative power in life that gives us a valid world to live in is spiritual. The whole story of man in this world gets its meaning and validity in its movement toward the purpose of the skies.

CHAPTER II

A REASONABLE RELIGION TO BELIEVE IN

THE final forces of our world of life are spiritual and moral forces. The validity of our world of life comes from within outward. We may find meanings in life that are not at all dependent upon what comes and goes with the years, but that rest upon the great permanencies of truth and righteousness. The validities of life cannot all be imprisoned within the calendar. Just because this is a valid world to live in, we may have a reasonable religion to believe in.

The story of our life and experience, as it shall work itself out across the years, our character and conduct, will be determined by our motives and convictions. Years ago in Burma, two men, who were deeply religious, faced the same kind of a world. One was a devotee of Buddha, with the deep conviction that "nothingness" is life's end. So he sat down in the midst of the dirt and endeavored to give negation to every desire. One was a disciple of Jesus, with the deep conviction of the "splendor of God" in every living person.

So Adoniram Judson established hospitals, schools, and churches in Rangoon and endeavored to give to every man a new and finer desire for life.

The real religion of a person is the motive or the conviction that is tucked into the deepest and innermost recess of being and lived upon, actually acted upon. Religion has gathered about itself much mystery, and often it seems that only some esoteric secret can open the door into its meaning. Religion is our practical or feeling attitude toward our world. Religion is our response to the wonder of life. Religion comes out of man's feeling of dependence, awe, and mystery in the presence of his great and encompassing world. There is not much that is obscure, remote, or mysterious in religion, except the high mystery and deep wonder of all the great and human things that lend charm and beauty and dignity to our living in this kind of a world.

The libraries of the world are crowded with psychologies and philosophies of religion; but religion, when we get at the real heart of it, is very simple. A philosophy of religion or a psychology of religion may be very valuable and significant, but they are not to be numbered among the absolute necessities. It is not necessary to know the chemistry of cook-

ing in order to enjoy a good meal or to endure a poor one. No more is it necessary to comprehend the intricacies of philosophy and psychology in order to be religious in heart and life.

All men live in the same world, but they think and feel in different and often hostile worlds. Life is an inward experience that is seeking always a relation for itself with outward facts. What we do with our world depends upon the pictures of reality which we create for ourselves. Our living is conditioned by our environment, but the deepest meaning of our experience depends upon the inward quality that we bring to life. We paint our pictures with pigments from within. This is what Dr. Alfred North Whitehead meant when he said: "Religion is the art and the theory of the internal life of man, so far as it depends on man himself and on what is permanent in the nature of things. . . . Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness."

A man's religion, his real religion, is that relation between himself and his universe which means or matters to him more than any other. Here is where we find most of that which makes human life, as we know it, worth living. Religion in its simplest meaning and ex-

pression is that power that binds us to God and leads to individual worth of character. "Religion," in Newman's noble phrase, "is the thought of two, and two only, absolute luminously self-evident beings—myself and my Creator." In its simplest meaning the word "religion" means "to bind together."

Acts must have motives. Results require causes. A poem cannot be produced by an explosion in a type foundry. Nor can we find reasonableness in these lives of ours, nor validity for our world, without a real and inspiring sense of a Divine Presence—a great and good background to life from which our motives derive their dignity and our convictions their meaning. As an old artist who was a native of Switzerland, but who was forced to do his work far away from the place of his birth, never painted a picture without at least suggesting in the background his beloved Alps, so we cannot really live life without the backgrounding of the Eternal against which the glow and color of our human story are pictured.

Religions in their forms or expressions are many, but religion in its reality is one. Religious forms or expressions are many—sometimes high and fine, sometimes low and bad, sometimes sublime and great, sometimes gro-

tesque and tragic—but behind the varying forms or expressions lies one great quality of human life.

At its height what may religion be? In the seventeenth century, Aberdeen University in Scotland graduated a young man of twenty by the name of Henry Scougal. He was almost immediately made a professor of philosophy. He died when he was twenty-eight years of age, but he left a little book, written as a letter to a friend who wanted a reasonable view of religion. It reads as though it had been written for our day. He titled it *The Life of God in the Soul of Man.* Back of all differing forms and expressions of religion he saw that religion was just one thing. Here is what he said: "True religion is the union of the soul with God, a real participation of the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul; or, in the apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us. Briefly, I know not how the nature of religion can be more fully expressed than by calling it a divine life, . . . the life of God in the soul of man." Here is the real genius of religion.

The forms of religion are many, but the spirit that gives life to the forms is in all of them the same. Matthew Arnold once said to Frederick Myers: "If you could ask the Sphinx

but one question and be sure of an answer, what would it be?" Quick as a flash his reply came: "I would ask, 'Is the universe friendly?'" The ancient Hebrew poet had the answer when he sang:

"Try the Eternal; you will find he is kind;
Happy the man who takes shelter with him!"

Test out the living God and you will discover the final forces of earth and sky working steadily on your side. In this fundamental adjustment of effort to the huge, hard tasks that confront us you will find the beginnings of a reasonable religion.

The story of man's life is pretty largely a story of man's search for a Reality far beyond himself. It is this struggle that makes life a glorious adventure of epic significance. Of course some contemporary journalistic cynics sneer at the idea of finding anything glorious in the human adventure. Henry L. Mencken put their philosophy in a single paragraph when he said: "The truth is that life on this earth is not only without rational significance but also apparently unintentional. The cosmic laws seem to have been set going for some purpose quite unrelated to human existence. Life is thus a sort of accidental by-product, as the sparks are an accidental by-product of the

horseshoe a blacksmith fashions on his anvil. The sparks are far more brilliant than the horseshoe, but all the same they remain essentially meaningless. They constitute, at best, a disease of the horseshoe—they involve a destruction of its tissue. Perhaps life, in the same way, is a disease of the cosmos."

A universe without moral values or spiritual forces makes man a mere by-product of the vast mechanical order of the universe. Here feverish desire is the driving force of life. The only ultimate progress conceivable in a mechanistic universe is a progress to eternal death. In this kind of a universe the cynic rates all man's dreams of goodness, beauty, and truth as but bad nightmares. The cynic classifies men as beasts; beasts who suppose with foolish idiocy that they are not beasts.

At the other extreme we have the mood of the humanist who finds in the human values, in and of themselves, the mark of the hero. The humanist assumes that this universe may be a vast physical machine. Instead of becoming cynical about man's place in this careless, disinterested mechanistic universe, he believes that the hero can be brought to triumph over the beast. Like Walter Lippmann, who writes *A Preface to Morals,* he finds spiritual values in the world of life and

great causes of human interest to command his loyalties. All that is needed to make the hero victorious over the beast is an adequate education or training.

In view of the fact that ignorance is a well-known cause of human misdirection, certainly the cure will be found in general and thorough education. Give a man true principles and he will follow them and rise to his highest and finest destiny. This was the view of Socrates, who declared that knowledge is power. The old Greek went so far as to make knowledge and character identical, saying that no man would willingly do wrong. He believed that a man would do wrong only from ignorance of what is good.

But early in the story of the world's life it was realized that human nature is not as easily responsive to reason as this. Eventually the germ of moral and spiritual evil was isolated and a strong element of obstinacy was found to interfere with man's struggle out of beastliness toward godliness.

Aristotle exploded the naïve optimism and humanism of Socrates about the perfectibility of human nature. Deeper, saner, stronger, wiser statements of the principles of personality the world has never heard than those of Aristotle. Right and wrong he found in the

clearly conceived and deliberately cherished end which man is seeking to promote.

Do you wish to know where you stand in the scale of personality? Here is the test: How large a section of this world do you care for in such a vital, responsible way, that you are thinking about its welfare, formulating plans for its enrichment, bending your energies toward its redemption? The world's master moralist knew how man was victimized by senseless appetites and blind passions. A wise thinker of ancient Greece put it in these words: "I see and approve the good, but deliberately practice the wrong." The end that man serves is often defeated in spite of man's knowledge.

Then the Stoic entered the scene and declared that man's power to integrate himself completely lay in the will. Admit the elements of rebellion in the human personality, then by sheer will-power defy them. The very best brief expression of the Stoic creed is found in Henley's lines:

"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul."

But is a man so the master of his fate and

the captain of his soul that he can face every rebellion of his life and by sheer power of his will command every situation? Christianity is altogether different from Stoicism, but many Christians in name are in practice Stoics.

One of the keenest and most honest men in the whole story of the world's life looked at the struggle from beastliness to godliness that goes on at the heart of life, and said: "The will is there, but not the power of doing what is right. I cannot be as good as I want to be, and I do wrong against my wishes." A great battle is being fought out on the arena of man's personality. The beast within him urges him to be content with those satisfactions that come from the fulfillment of appetite. But there persists that strange luring call challenging him to an adventure toward Goodness and Truth and Beauty. The Beast within snarls "Get!" Another impulse within whispers "Give!" He knows the worth of honor, but he is not always honorable. He admires the red badge of courage, but he often surrenders to the flag of cowardice. He salutes duty—"stern Daughter of the voice of God . . . who art a light to guide"—but he listens, rather, to the word of convention and convenience and stumbles in the dark.

He feels that love might be a great redemptive experience, but he degrades it by failing to consecrate it with a high and holy purpose. He cries out as did another man: "Left to myself, I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

Both the education that would give man the knowledge that is power and the philosophy that would give man the will that is power are decidedly limited. The ideal that beckons man to be a man and the will that calls man to will the good for some high end of life have both been bankrupted by the failure to supply sufficient resources to meet the actual needs of man's life.

Knowledge is not enough. We need a first-hand acquaintance of our limitations and our possibilities, and then we need a creative power that will lift us above our ordinary selves. And that creative power is religion. The purpose and the power of life are found in God—in the living God who has been disclosed in Jesus Christ. In him lies man's hope. A recognition of the purpose toward which mankind is marching and struggling is what the world needs now.

Religion is not a tolerated survival out of

the yesterdays. Religion is man's solitary declaration of the validity of his struggle toward God. Religion is not a catalogue of certain things required to be done in certain ways for certain reasons. Religion is a spirit, a living spirit, in which we are to do everything, and by which we are to live. It is the spirit that binds all of life into a community of love, into a fellowship of intelligent good will. It is the spirit, the living spirit, which, if put into all of our work, gives it the sanctity of a sacrament. All of life, from worship to work, must be lifted to the sacramental. One may conduct a service of the church in an irreligious mood; another may plow a field or tend a machine in a spirit akin to prayer. Many kinds of life must be lived, and no one form or expression of life has a right to monopolize the term "religious" or "sacred." A divorce between work and worship degrades religion and narrows life. Religion and life are one, bound indissolubly, else neither is of value.

This was the clear insight and interpretation of Jesus. Jesus never talked of religion as religion; he always talked about life lived religiously. He always endeavored to lift the whole business of living into the spirit and truth of God. A nineteen-year-old English

servant girl caught this spirit and put her devotion into these words:

"Lord of all pots and pans and things, since I've
no time to be
A saint by doing lovely things, or watching late
with thee,
Or dreaming in the dawnlight, or storming
heaven's gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals, and washing
up the plates.

"Although I must have Martha's hands, I have a
Mary mind;
And when I black the boots and shoes, thy san-
dals, Lord, I find,
I think of how they trod the earth, what time I
scrub the floor;
Accept this meditation, Lord; I haven't time
for more.

"Warm all the kitchen with thy love, and light it
with thy peace;
Forgive me all my worrying, and make all
grumbling cease.
Thou who didst love to give men food, in room
or by the sea,
Accept this service that I do—I do it unto thee."

Jesus is spoken of by the New Testament writers as "the Pioneer of Life," "the Explorer of Faith." Throughout his career he so far outdistanced others in his trust, his hope, his love, that now, twenty centuries after, we

have not yet seen any one abreast of him. He ventured everything—even life upon the cross—to bring the Eternal into time. Hartley Coleridge described this religion as not only courageous, but redeeming:

"Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less feeling, fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given;
It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact."

Our real religion is not what we declare intellectually, nor what we defend in debate, but what we actually believe, take in our purpose, and act upon. Our real religion is the spirit of life that we live by; the motive that we enshrine at the center of life, as the driving and dominating motive; the purpose that we elect as the compelling purpose of our whole curriculum of action.

Two common attitudes are widely used against the very idea of the religious life. It is not unusual to find many people influenced by these attitudes. There is abroad the very definite impression that religion means a reducing of the scope and interest of life. It is easy to find men of intelligence who look upon religion as a narrowing factor in life.

Concerning two of the great newspapers of New York City, it was said that one made decency so hideously unattractive, and the other made wickedness so charmingly beautiful, that one was in doubt which to choose—the unattractive righteous way or the charming wicked way.

True, there are people who are nobly religious, but painfully dull. It is not at all difficult to find religious people who do not permit any free play of intelligence over the field of human experience. Sometimes an overdone solemnity that has crowded all the sweetness and light out of life is confused with religion. There are good people who unfortunately create the impression that religion is a perpetual quasi-sea-sickness or a type of permanent dyspepsia.

We do not find it at all difficult to run away from this type of religiousness. A religion that narrows and restricts the expression of life has no appeal for us. We are opposed to anything that will reduce the scope and interest of life. Often people write religion down as a thing that cramps and prohibits the expression of life.

But a more profound and deep-seated source of people's turning away from religion is in themselves. More people than we like to

admit lack a sense of what Dr. John Erskine, of Columbia, calls "the moral obligation to be intelligent." We have said in proverb, "Be good, and let who will be clever," as though stupidity were a blood-relative to goodness, and cleverness the first step into irreligiousness. The late President Eliot, of Harvard University, wrote to a friend a few years before his death: "I am strongly inclined to write a lecture, and deliver it upon every possible occasion, on the subject, 'Do People Any Longer Think?'" President Glenn Frank, of the University of Wisconsin, is lifting the same question for our day.

This thoughtless, impressionistic attitude toward life has victimized multitudes of people into a low, mean, and poor taste in the presence of the highest, noblest, and best. Why is it that, in the past decade, our bookstores have been crowded with the sort of stuff frankly designed to pander to low and trivial tastes, while we have developed no masterpieces like those of the often flouted and despised Victorian period? Altogether too many of our contemporary writers are guilty of the prostitution of high ideals, and so they fail to see and interpret life as it really is. Why is it that our serious journals of thought and discrimination decrease and pass out of

existence, while the tabloids and ribald magazines flourish to pay high dividends to publishing houses?

One reason why so many fail to give their loyalty to the Christian religion is because of their wretchedly poor taste in the presence of the high and fine and noble. Wide areas of life have been inundated by tides of cynical materialism; and this has left many a young man and woman struggling in a fetid swamp when the higher range of human interest ought to be the native interest.

We know the response that is made here: "We must remember that in a democracy every man has a right to his own opinion, every man has a right to choose what he wants, every man has a right to his own taste." But let us go back to the thesis of the previous chapter—that the validity of a man's opinion is dependent upon the amount of the eternal ingredient of truth that it carries.

Twenty-three hundred years ago this question was discussed in ancient Athens. Our modern theory of self-expression is not as modern as it seems. Any one who tells you that the way to resolve your moral difficulties is to let your desires have full and free expression is either a fool or an ignorant mountebank. We must achieve a self to express.

Back in old Athens the popular vogue was abroad in which every man said: "I have a right to my own opinion. My opinion is as good as anyone's; I have a right to my own desire and taste. My taste is as correct as my neighbor's."

Wise old Aristotle had the insight that recognized that there is a standard man and a standard mind in all the great interests of life. Once this standard man stands out clearly and distinctly, he absolutely contradicts every wrong opinion and he correctly condemns all the poor taste there is in the world.

Here is the central and most significant sphere of the influence of Jesus. He is the standard man and the standard mind in all the relations of life. When we get his mind on our human problem, living is lifted for us to a new and higher level. When we see our experience through his eyes a sacramental purpose appears. Whether we look toward God or toward our fellows, he is the standard to which we can repair. He corrects all wrong and mistaken thinking about life and makes poor, tawdry taste ashamed of itself. He finds life at its solitariness and searches the very center of life. He so thoroughly understood the processes and powers of man's life that he

said: "Ye must be born anew." There must be a new thought about life that will reckon with "the moral obligation to be intelligent." There must be a new purpose for life that will bring a new taste for its higher values. There must be an attainment and an achievement of internal harmony.

This brings us out exactly where we started. We will never get on with a reasonable religion until we have something like an accurate appreciation of what religion is. Religion is the creative power and the integrating energy of great character. Religion is the one central and supreme passion that dominates and directs character to its goal. In the Christian religion it means the presence of the Christlike God, living with the spirit of man, as that creative power and integrating energy. It means that the one central and supreme passion that dominates and directs character to its goal is a devotion to that God that was disclosed in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

We must actually find that which is central in life. "There is a spirit in man, and the Almighty giveth him understanding," was the insight of a man who felt that man's life could not be ultimately expressed merely in terms of his bodily activities. What is the body without the spirit? What is any mechanism

without the power and energy to drive the mechanism? Aristotle said that the spirit is the "truth of the body," its meaning, its value. The body gets its high meaning just in so far as man has the insight to see that his "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit."

The Christian religion is our gospel of hope for the winning of an ever fuller, more truly effective realization of human life. Robert Browning has put it for us in incomparable words:

"Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod:
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe."

All human life has its meaning, its worth, and its beauty when the energy of the living God is in it as its integrating and creative power. The Christian religion recognizes every factor that enters into the constitution of man. It organizes all the complex capacities of human nature into a unity, where every human energy is placed in a living relation to its own high value. It orders man's nature and brings to him that life, passion, and purpose that make possible harmonious

action and devoted service. It sees life in its ultimate meaning in terms of that triumph that Jesus disclosed on the cross.

A reasonable religion is primarily a great human experience. You have a right to ask me here just what I mean by experience. I think I can put it to you this way: You will live your life with a real thought gripping the mind, a high feeling of value stirring the heart, a purpose of devotion guiding the will. This unity of life in thought, feeling, and purpose is the living and attractive center that holds for you everything that is of any real meaning to you. Here you will have a genuine, inward, solitary life built up out of real and disciplined thoughts, fine and discriminating feelings, noble and developed purposes, and these literally shot into society through action and service. One of the early interpreters of Christianity declared it to be "the power of God unto salvation," the "dynamite of the Eternal," the explosive energy of the Infinite.

At Edgewood Arsenal on the Chesapeake Bay, the great coast defense artillery units are perfected for action and service. I saw there a great cannon. Near by I saw the mighty projectile. The projectile was fitted to the gun. The gun was designed to receive

the projectile. The mighty gun was loaded and the enormous projectile was hurled twenty and more miles out over the water to its mark.

I see the spirit of man with a great human experience of the infinite value of life, compounded of thoughts, feelings, and purposes. I see the activity of man with a great human achievement of victory, over the forces that have threatened to undo him. I see that there are still monumental wrongs against the spirit of man. And I see that all the powers and energies of experience are ready to be sped into the heart of society. I see this experience of inner genuineness that we call honesty. A genuine thought, an honest feeling, an authentic purpose—here is the organizing center. Once we gather the marching energies of life round this central order, character will be unified. Here is our chance to have the energies of life effectively launched into society as a real and explosive power. The resources of life are fitted to meet great purposes.

Arthur Hallam said that he liked the Christian religion because "it fits into all the folds of one's nature." Religion as experience gives infinite range of possibility to human living. One cannot live very long without becoming

aware of the crippling power of life. The hardest fact we have to face is the fact that life is a tragedy. Life is as tragic as Calvary! So many people launch themselves against the world and get hurt, come off crippled in mind, maimed in heart, broken in purpose. It is an illusion and a lie to think of this world as a place of Pollyanna happiness. An unimaginably large proportion of men and women have reached their limit. They face life with its problems and perplexities and they are helpless.

Religion is the great creative power in the soul of man, assuring him of the value of his own life, and unfolding before him increasing potencies and energies for living. Religion faces the defeat of life with a Christ to bear it and win a victory out of it. Religion is not a once-and-for-all completed laboratory experiment; it is a growing and continuously unfolding experience.

One of the loveliest spots in all the world is Lake Lucerne in Switzerland. I went for a sail on that lake of beauty and legendary association. As we left the little town of Lucerne it seemed that the captain was heading the boat straight toward a high mountain that inclosed and narrowed our view. Rounding the promontory the beautiful Burgenstock lay

before us in majestic beauty. We had come to a widening view and a place of spreading beauty. To the left rose the towering Rigi, a still more stirring view. Rounding another pyramidal headland, another vista of gracious beauty spread before us, and then another vision more magnificent still was ours, until we came to Brunnen, shut in by rocky banks and encircled by lofty mountains. Leaving Brunnen we entered that largest and most beautiful part of the lake, celebrated in Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell," and sailing on toward the head of the lake, encountered beauty and grandeur many times greater than any seen before. That is the way the Christian religion appears to me. It is a growing and creative power in the mind of every person who will really try it. We do not see all its greatness and grandeur at once. We have to take the journey for ourselves and discover the increasing vistas of character that it will unfold for us.

It is not without significance that so many, many men without religious insight, no matter how keen intellectually they may be, collapse and fail before they are half way through life. Lord Byron on completing his thirty-sixth year finds his "days are in the yellow leaf." When we know his misanthropy

and despair, he does not surprise us with his confession: "The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone." When we know Nietzsche we are not surprised to hear him say, "I regard Christianity as the most fatal and seductive lie that ever existed." He knew the high purpose of Jesus, and because he believed that this was a godless universe, he gave bitter denial to religion.

Nor is the significance to be escaped that when men are fine in character, the influence of that character upon their intellect makes it expansive, in insight, in range of vision, in discovery of truth, in growth and power along all the ways of life. Louis Pasteur had to face, in his long career, an intense battle against his colleagues in the scientific world. When he was elected to the Academy, he took occasion to give a personal testimony as to the power of religion in his life: "Blessed is he who carries within himself a God, an ideal, and who obeys it; ideal of art, ideal of science, ideal of the gospel virtues, therein lie the springs of great thoughts and great actions; they all reflect light from the Infinite."

The ancient Hebrew poet had the secret of finding a reasonable religion to believe in: "O taste and see that the Lord is good." "Try the Eternal; you will find he is kind."

All will agree that everybody ought to act reasonably. Many of us do not like certain foods because we have never tasted them, and we are so unreasonable that nobody has ever been able to convince us that they are good. Some of the things that I now like the best are things that I once was sure I never would like. But some friend inveigled me into tasting, and now I am always ready for more.

Many people will tell us that they do not like religion. They have never made the venture to try it and they refuse to try it. If they could only be persuaded to indulge in this great experience, which holds the creative power and integrating energy for great and happy living, many of them would be leaders in the Christian movement instead of standing outside.

The real religion of a person begins with an experiment and finds its realization in a growing experience in which unity with God, harmony with one's fellows, and peace with oneself are attained. The religion of Jesus as made known in history and in life has no other way to attest its reality. We take as our motto J. R. Illingworth's aphorism: "Christianity refuses to be proved first and practiced afterward: its practice and its proof go hand in hand."

Religion has no meaning unless it is a reality, and its workableness is the test of its reality. I endeavor to persuade a man that sugar is sweet. I say, "This sugar is sweet." He says, "I do not believe it." I say, "Taste it and see." He says, "I won't." Is he reasonable? I endeavor to persuade a man to become a Christian. I say to him, "Jesus Christ is sufficient for every need and demand of life." He says, "I do not believe it." I say, "Try him." He says, "I won't." Is he reasonable?

Behind all the accepted laws of science lie countless thousands of experiments. If we doubt the validity or reality of a scientific law, we have but to repeat the experiment. Behind this historic conviction of the Christian religion are countless generations of men and women who have tested it and proved it. The scientific method will prove the reality and the validity of the Christian evangel. If we doubt the God and Father of Jesus, we must experiment, and let God convince us. To give ourselves to God in Christ, to trust him with the issues of life, to follow him with the loyalties of devotion is to discover that religion works, and works to the enlightenment and enrichment of life.

Open your life to the creative power of the

living energy of God, the perfecting might of the presence of the Infinite Spirit in the spirit of man. Religion may be as mean as the meanest human being can make it. But if you want a reasonable religion, remember that the Christian religion is what Jesus made it.

Religion does not require authority; religion brings authority. You could not possibly stand before the Sistine Madonna, by Raphael, in the room in the Dresden Gallery, where it hangs in solitary eminence, and not cry out, "How perfect in loveliness, how great in strength that mother is, how divine that child!" As you stand before that masterpiece, it is not the testimony of tradition, nor the thousands of its living admirers throughout the world, that renders it beautiful; it makes its own irresistible impression. And if you stand in the presence of Jesus Christ and see religion as it is in him, your finest and deepest insight will confess, "This is the Highest, this is the Best, this is Life as it should be; and I am now purposed to give that Life a chance to make me like that." As you stand before Him who is the infinitely Holy, the eternally True, the supremely Loving, you may live with that high and mastering insight that will tell what is most worth knowing about life.

CHAPTER III

A RELIABLE GOD TO TRUST IN

THE great and dominant interest in the life of Jesus was to bring to men an awareness of God as the final reality. He knew that character and life could not be stable unless constructed in obedience to some one reliable principle. The only way in which we can avoid the tragedy and nuisance of living many lives inside of what is intended to be a single personality is to find some one unifying purpose or center around which to build life and character.

A building constructed in disregard of that principle becomes simply a piece of carpentering. A building constructed in conformity to some one directing plan, erected in obedience to some one guiding idea, created in compliance with some one unifying principle, issues as a piece of architecture.

Some men are carpentered and some are architectured. Some men are miscellaneous pieces of patchwork made up of incongruous designs loosely stitched together. Other men are a whole fabric, with one continuous pattern running through from start to finish,

living a life that is compactly organized about an unintermitting central impulse. Such men are something. The rest only count as something; as a matter of fact, they are nothing—except items in the total population.

The act of determining upon what shall be based one's dominating principle of character and conduct is of serious import. Inevitably, if there is a reliable God at the heart of things, our thought of him should become of utmost significance at the point of life's dominant interest.

One of the most significant choices that any man ever makes is the choice of his life-work. His employment, his art, his profession, or whatever he may call it, will eventually gather around the impelling purpose of his character. Industrially, professionally, or artistically, his life becomes in consequence an industrial, professional, or artistic unit. A unified life does not ramble with aimless feet as a lazy tramp; it moves with certain step toward a real objective. Such a life has a definite meaning. When it is in progress and when it is finished, something can be said about it; concrete statement can be made of it. It is not fogged nor lost in vagueness or indefiniteness that makes it incoherent. This holds equally true whether the dominant interest

or the guiding principle determined upon be a good one or a poor one.

As we are seeking some one unifying purpose around which to build life and character, we come to the fundamental question of all religious thinking: "Is there a reliable God to trust in?" After all is said and done our only permanent interest is God. Alfred North Whitehead has it right when he says: "To-day there is but one religious dogma in debate: What do you mean by 'God'? And in this respect to-day is like all its yesterdays. This is the fundamental religious dogma, and all other dogmas are subsidiary to it."

Any uncertainty in our conception of God unsteadies our thinking and feeling about life. For, inevitably, our thought of God determines what we think about ourselves and our fellows, about life, duty, and destiny. Our thought of God colors our philosophy of history and our interpretation of experience. If we are wrong about God, we cannot be right about anything else. When Jesus climaxed his Sermon on the Mount by saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," he was supremely concerned about the matter of life's validities and reliabilities, character's guiding principles.

If I understand the teachings of Jesus at

all, they all deal with what is practically the same matter. His profound concern was to bring to life a complete and competent disclosure of a reliable God to trust in. In his teaching he was indifferent to the particular secular life one might pursue; and, what is more, he paid very little attention to secular life separate from the spiritual. But he did concentrate his interest upon rendering character a solid unit by bringing it under the constraint and the inspiration of a single comprehensive loyalty—loyalty to God—making that loyalty the fundamental fact of all normal life; and, because fundamental, to be made an operative agency in life's first beginnings. God is not a dream, nor a guess, nor a shadow thrown against the background of our hopes and fears. He is the meaning of the universe and the hope of our experience; and to know him, as Dante said, is to learn "how to make our lives eternal."

It is irrational and illogical to assume that this universe of ours is without mind or purpose. Can that which is without intelligence produce intelligence? Can that which is without character bring goodness into being? Can that which is without beauty and harmony cause a response that will bring delight? The mind of man cannot be finally satisfied with

the idea of a meaningless and purposeless universe.

The interpretation that reduces mind to the position and grade of an incident, that elevates the mindless to the place of permanence and sole reality, is in dead opposition to all the highest interests of our human world. It is one thing to believe that there is a God, another thing to know him. Michael Pupin, celebrated scientist, professor of electro-magnetics in Columbia University, was once approached by a young undergraduate with the question: "You do not mean to say that an intelligent man like you believes in God?"

"No!" gravely answered the professor, "I do not believe in God; I know God, and it is the only knowledge I have that is worth anything!"

If God is the meaning of our universe and the hope of our experience, why doesn't he appear more real to us? Dean Inge, of old Saint Paul's Cathedral, in one of his sermons to Oxford students, suggested: "If we spend sixteen hours daily of our waking life in thinking about the affairs of the world, and about five minutes in thinking about God, it is quite natural and inevitable that this world will appear two hundred times more real to us than God."

There is no possibility of understanding the world of nature without a reliable God to trust in. We do not find it difficult to believe that in the early yesterdays of the world's life God was the great essential fact in the experience of the race. In that far away day the thunder was his voice; the pestilence at times was his sword. He fought on the side of his friends; he sent the rain or gave the drought; he made himself known to those that he particularly favored. He led the marching hosts of a strange people with pillars of light by night and sheltered them with moving screens of clouds by day as they fled from slavery toward the freedom of a new and unknown land. We do not find it particularly difficult to believe that these primitive peoples were sure of a God who was a present, living reality. But somehow we find it difficult to win a sense of the certainty of God for our day.

For our day and generation the sense of the reality of God has been such a disappearing sense that much of life has been robbed of wonder and mystery. The thunder is no longer the voice of God, but the crash of air split by the lightning's rush. The pestilence is no longer the sword of the Eternal, drawn in anger and put up again in answer to prayer,

but a definite foe to be scientifically trapped and conquered. The clouds are no longer shadows of the hand of God; they are the results of sea-born vapors and earth-born winds. Realm by realm we have come to wider understandings of the ways of nature's behavior, and because we have acquired an efficiency in describing nature's processes, many have dismissed the necessity of God.

What chance does God have to appear in our consciousness if we live in a world that has no need of him? But we must look with seeing eyes. We see in the world of nature just exactly what we bring to it. Power, thought, beauty, the opportunity for life are all here—but only for those who see and understand!

If we do not find God at the beginning of our thought, we cannot find him anywhere. Whoso lives in a godless world will reach only a godless heaven, and will come down without any high sense of life's finest meaning. We are under the obligation that truth puts upon us to accept whatever scientific account of our world and its operations is finally established. And we are also under obligation to use that insight and reverence that will get us God. If our sense of God is lacking, the fault is not with God, who is endeavoring to teach us in

uncounted ways how near and real he is, but in the dimness of our own souls.

Selma Lagerlöf, in her collection of *Christ Legends,* tells this story of the Holy Night:

There was a man who went out in the dark night to borrow coals to kindle a fire. He went from hut to hut and knocked.

"Dear friends, help me!" he said. "My wife has just given birth to a child, and I must make a fire to warm her and the little one."

The man walked and walked. But all in the village were asleep in their houses. At last he saw the gleam of a fire a long way off.

It was a shepherd's fire. The flocks lay close about it, guarded by three fierce dogs. As the man approached the dogs jumped to attack, and the unfriendly shepherd hurled his spiked staff at the stranger; but the jaws and teeth of the dogs did not harm the man, and the spiked staff turned aside. The sheep lay undisturbed, as the man came to the fire and asked the shepherd for a few coals; and the shepherd, seeing the man had nothing to carry them in and thinking he would not be able to take any away, said: "Take as much as you need." Then the man stooped and picked coals from the ashes with his bare hands, and he laid them in his mantle. And he did not burn his hands when he touched them, nor did the coals scorch his mantle; but he carried them away as if they had been nuts or apples.

And when the shepherd, who was such a cruel and hard-hearted man, saw all this, he began to

wonder: "What kind of night is this, when the dogs do not bite, the staff does not kill, the sheep are not scared, or the fire scorch?" He called the stranger back and said to him: "What kind of a night is this? And how does it happen that all things show you compassion?"

Then said the man: "I cannot tell you if you yourself do not see it." And he wished to go his way that he might soon make a fire and warm his wife and child.

The story relates how the shepherd followed the man to the chill grotto where mother and babe were lying. Hard as he was, the shepherd saw that the child might freeze, and loosening his knapsack from his shoulder, he took from it a soft white sheepskin for the child to sleep in. Then the tale goes on:

But just as soon as he showed that he too could be merciful his eyes were opened, and he saw what he had not been able to see before and heard what he could not have heard before.

He saw that all around him stood a ring of little silver-winged angels, and each held a stringed instrument, and all sang in loud tones that to-night the Saviour was born who should redeem the world from its sins.

Then he understood how all things were so happy this night that they did not want to do anything wrong.

He was so happy because his eyes had been opened that he fell upon his knees and thanked God.

The old tale ends with these meaningful words:

> It is not revealed by the light of lamps or candles, and it does not depend upon sun and moon; but that which is needful is, that we have such eyes as can see God's glory.

Only that man will come to know God as the reality at the heart of nature who has some of the glory of God within his own life. Edna St. Vincent Millay has put it all in words for us:

> "The world stands out on either side
> No wider than the heart is wide;
> Above the world is stretched the sky
> No higher than the soul is high.
>
> "The heart can push the sea and land
> Farther away on either hand;
> The soul can split the sky in two
> And let the face of God shine through.
>
> "But east and west will pinch the heart
> That cannot keep them pushed apart,
> And he whose soul is flat—the sky
> Will cave in on him by and by."

The one thing that modern science has brought to us is the conviction of the existence of power and energy outside and beyond ourselves. In every breath, in every breeze, in every storm and stress, we are aware of power

and energy other than our own. Any other conclusion is a contradiction of what we face every day and hour.

This world of nature looks as if it were the expression of thought. In the flower, in the tree, in the bird, in the beast of the field and the fish of the sea there seems to be a persistent movement toward some great end. In everything that we see there seems to be an aspiration toward fulfillment or completion, all of life reaching out toward some goal that seems to be imbedded in the order and structure of the universe. All that we know, all that we see, is in movement toward some great objective. A great objective or a great goal without intelligence is simply nonsense. What a flood of light is here, shining through the marching ages, transfiguring even the mud and slime of primeval time!

We can follow the long and fascinating story of the ascent of life as the scientist and patient investigator reads the record out of an æonian past. From the beginnings of a fire-mist up through to the complexity of life as we know it there seems to be the movement of an ordered purpose. We may describe this long story by calling it Evolution, but a deeper insight will lead us to say "God." The intelligence at the heart of things is God!

Some are saying that this universe seems to be a great and wild mechanism, smashing its way along without any interest or concern for what happens. It is perfectly legitimate to call this universe a mechanism, if it be recognized that the universe has a goal or an objective. Not so long ago it seemed scientifically correct to reduce this whole universe of ours into a series of causes and effects. A mechanistic interpretation of the universe that found no purpose or goal or objective seemed very plausible. But to-day Professor Alfred North Whitehead, in his *Science and the Modern World,* tells us: "The old foundations of scientific thought are becoming unintelligible. Time, space, matter, material, ether, electricity, mechanism, organism, configuration, structure, pattern, function all require reinterpretation. What is the sense of talking about a mechanical interpretation when you do not know what you mean by mechanics?" When we look at this world of nature a bit, we can get at least the beginnings of faith. We can follow the story of man as he faces the powers and principalities of the world of nature and subdues them for his own purposes. He emerges from his rude cave and his cruel superstitions, learns to use his tools and to control his ways, devises governments

and writes philosophies, creates art and sings songs, produces characters of extraordinary capacity for devotion and self-sacrifice who live in hope of a kingdom of eternal good-will and righteousness.

It does appear as though something of eternal significance were happening in this unfolding record. We see in the world of nature just exactly what we have the insight to see. If we can really see into the heart of this pageant of the world's life, we will say:

"I am aware of a glory that runs
From the core of myself to the core of the suns."

As I climbed high up in the Alps, it was interesting to note how life was always winning its way and adapting itself to the hostilities of the mountains. In the valleys were the giant trees. As they marched toward the cold heights they adapted themselves to meet the onslaught of ice and snow. At the timber line, almost two miles above the level of the sea, where the glacier pushed its icy fingers down toward the valley, the trees were little and gnarled. "But," said the mountain guide, "see how tough and adventurous!" Is not that the real and thrilling story of life everywhere? One can imagine a storm in which no ship could live, a hurricane that no Leviathan

could outsail, a cyclone which no city of man could survive, an earthquake that would leave no human habitation, a degree of heat or cold that would destroy every living thing, a universal cataclysm that would spread death everywhere. But there is a restraint upon those enemies that threaten extinction to life. Life would cease if all its enemies were given free hand. We live in a world of nature that is favorable and sympathetic to this adventure of life.

It is not reasonable to say that this great mechanism of nature is without mind, working in darkness, without aim or purpose, by sheer luck arriving at the stupendous result of life adapted more and more to its environment. The mind that is sound is aware of the power, the thought, and the order of favor to life, in the world of nature. This is not a matter of blind evolution; it is the movement of life toward something.

Unless there be a movement of life toward some goal we cannot have evolution but only unprogressive change. A purely materialistic interpretation of the world will have to start with dead, inert material. We may get this material into motion, but the mere touch and go of this dead material does not have within it the capacity for growth or evolution. To

merely change a set of relations between dead or inert things may give us a new set of circumstances, but no new factor is introduced until some vital urge changes the inner structure. We may describe the changes that take place in a series of outer relations and call it evolution. But the determining factor is not merely in the arrangement and rearrangement of dead or inert things, but the response of the inner spirit of life. Change that is purposeless and unprogressive may take place in the changing relations of dead and inert things. Evolution appears, and appears only, when life subdues dead and inert things to that order and favor that moves toward some great end. It does appear as if something great were on in this living universe. All our best insight into nature points to a goal friendly to life.

Man is the vanguard of nature's advance and answers to the thought of God. If in all our relationships and adaptations to our world we do nothing more than react to external stimuli, then why is our struggle full of mind and the process of nature around us mindless? If we cannot describe as Spirit that which so responds to our spirit, we must remain dumb. We have left then a dead universe, a sphinx—a nameless and inscrutable

mystery. The sanity and sanctity of our universe is in our awareness of a reliable God to trust in.

There is no possibility of understanding the goodness in man, and in the story of man's life in this world, without a reliable God to trust in. Some are telling us that the ultimate purpose for man is to live in harmony with a good moral standard, even while knowing that the universe itself is blind, hostile to or indifferent to all moral standards. The finest morality, we are told, is to face this hostile universe with a high and fine heroism and to go down fighting while standing on the foundation of unyielding despair. The fine optimism of Browning could sing,

> "God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world!"

certain that everything would come out right in the end, no matter how bad men were. The dark pessimism of Joseph Wood Krutch declares that "ours is a lost cause and there is no place for us in the natural universe; but we are not, for all that, sorry to be human. We should rather die as men than live as animals." He insists that everything will come out wrong in the end, no matter how good men are.

We must look very closely at that which man brings into this whole world story, at the native capacities, powers, and aptitudes that come into the scene with the coming of man. When we scan the human record we do not need to be especially keen or expert in our insights to note the murder, theft, sensuality, and beastliness that mar the human story. What are we going to do with this evil? Cropping up persistently in the literatures of the world is the view that there simply is no such thing as evil. It is an illusion. "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so," is the popular proverb. Trivial and superficial, in the midst of our whirls and thrills, how often we hear it said:

"Good and bad and right and wrong!
Wave the silly words away!
This is wisdom—to be strong!
This is virtue—to be gay!

"Let us sing and dance, until
We shall know the final art;
How to banish good and ill
With the laughter of the heart!"

Our modern veneered and upholstered civilization has an amazing capacity for facing the fact of evil and tragedy and dismissing it as merely relative. "It takes all kinds of people

to make a world," we say. The blunders and crimes of men are, in the life of the universe, what bad grammar or obscene picturing may be in a good play—degrading and terrible, considered in themselves, but an actual beauty when taken as a part of the whole story. To criticize evil in the universe, we are told, is like finding fault with Shakespeare for the indecision of Hamlet or the jealousy of Othello. Man is "an excuse-inventing animal" when he faces the evil and beastliness that mar the human story. A leisured and comfort-assured doctrinaire may tell us that we need a new substitute for righteousness; that we should live decently and do right, not because it is decent and right, but because it is good taste.

It is true, as Mark Twain said, when it was suggested to him that he escape the burden of financial obligation by availing himself of the bankruptcy laws, "that honor is a sterner taskmaster than the law!" But what is this, when you get to the heart of it, but a witness to the essential beauty of holiness? Immanuel Kant recognized this: "Two things fill the mind with admiration and awe: the starry heavens above and the moral law within." We shall never find a validity or reliability for life until we find a governing principle of goodness within the soul of man.

We may create our comfort-loving illusions, but sooner or later we have to face the realism of broken hearts and wrecked lives, sin and suffering. The headlines of the daily papers furnish enough material to make us believe that the native capacities, powers, and aptitudes that come into the scene with the coming of man are those of murder, theft, sensuality, and beastliness. We need not wonder at the contemporary cynicism that discounts man's goodness, nor should we be surprised at the type of popular pessimism which is simply a revival of the old theological doctrine of total depravity.

The centuries of human wickedness and war, sin and savagery are enough to tempt one to agree with Machiavelli that men are a cheap lot, selfish, petty, incredibly mean, absurdly vain, unspeakably vile. The ancient prophet Elijah surrendered to a disillusion and despair over his people and asked only to die. He forgot, what we forget, that even in an age as foul as a pigsty, there were thousands who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Sin is not the creature of the imagination. Sin is not something that we conjure out of experience to add to the fear of living. Jesus faced sin as fact and a reality. He knew it as the defeat of man's reach toward the goal of life.

He knew it as missing the mark, but lived and died as though he had the secret to overcome its power.

The story of man's life in this world is not complete until we take into account man's aspirations, hopes, and dreams. Many a man has lived in this very world as

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

Many a man has faced with high-hearted courage all the intrenched wrong about him and the deep struggle with evil within his own soul and has come off victorious. Many a man has remained true to his ideal of truth and goodness, though offered the kingdoms of this world as the price of capitulation. Many a man has died for the right and counted it a high privilege to lay down his life in sacrifice to a cause.

The martyrdoms and devotions that have taken men out in loyalty to great causes; the ideals and consecrations that have bound men to high duties; the purposes and dreams that have lifted men to noble sacrifices cannot be

dismissed as without meaning. They tell in eloquent fashion of the reliable God to trust in that man has found in his experience with life.

If we see all of the story of man's life, we will find it difficult not to believe that there is in our human world "a power not ourselves that is making for righteousness." How are we going to explain the capacities, powers, and aptitudes that man uses to build his world of faith, hope, and love except by the reality of a reliable God to trust in?

A man does not explain the production of his wealth by saying that he inherited it. No matter how carefully we explain the process by which wealth has been carried from one hand to another, we do not explain wealth. Wealth is a human creation. Wealth implies by its very existence the whole drama of labor, and toil, and sorrow, and gladness, and joy of creation. The thousand high capacities that characterize the personality of man are not explained by merely describing the fact of descent.

These human capacities of ours are creations. They are an accumulation of creations through the action and inter-action of our human life in the order of the world. In and through and over this action and interaction

of our human life there moves the originating and creative spirit of God.

> "Out of the base, insensate clod
> The luminous, strong hands of God
> Have shaped us . . ."

In any accurate reading of the human story, we will find the presence of the living and loving God. The great and beautiful river is not explained by its course. The volume of its flow at the end is not accounted for by saying that it has come a thousand miles. The river is not explained by the number and size of its tributaries, nor by the springs from which it first issues. The elements, the forces, the laws, the spirit of the whole universe are needed to account for that great, beautiful, triumphant river. It is exactly so with man. The truth of this life of ours, and its explanation, are found in the spirit of the whole, the soul of the universe, the best at the center of the Infinite, the heart of the Eternal—God!

The story of a great and good personality is an absolute enigma in a godless universe. The profoundest note, out of man's facing up to the hostilities of the world around him, is his testimony of the help that has come to him out of the unseen, of the strength that has perfected itself in weakness. The great and high

souls of our race are not self-made. They are not originations in the teeth of a despairing universe of fate, protesting a universal hostility that holds ultimate defeat for every hope of man. They are the creation of the Eternal Spirit, and they bring their own apostolic credentials "by purity of life, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the proclamation of the truth, by the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness, wielded in both hands; through honor and ignominy, through calumny and praise." They are witnesses of the "glory that runs to the core of the suns." They are disclosures of the moral life of the Eternal God.

The pictures that come out of man's profoundest experience of life—friendship, love, parenthood, justice—are the true clue to the appreciation of a reliable God to trust in. That was Plato's meaning when he said: "God is never in any way unrighteous; he is perfect righteousness." Jesus Christ is the outcome of the sympathetic soul of the universe. He is not an accident without organic meaning in the life of the world. He drew his being from the heart of the Eternal Being. He is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He is the supreme disclosure of what God is. He is "the pioneer of faith," "the captain of sal-

vation." This is why the historic church has placed the incarnation at the center of its teaching; it has seen accurately "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

As Christians we find the reliability of God attested by Jesus Christ. He is all that we desire or need of God. He not only portrays our search for the Eternal; he discloses God's search for us. We could never find a God who was not really seeking to reveal himself to us. If there is much in the world that is hostile to goodness, we interpret it as not yet completed after God's heart and as waiting for men of godlike intent to bring it nearer the Father's desire. As scientists we assume that the world and its resources are to be mastered and understood to serve the needs of humanity. As Christians we assume that anything that is hostile or indifferent to the purpose of the God and Father of Jesus is to be conquered and made amenable to the sway of the spirit of Jesus.

The "good news" of the Christian gospel is that we find in Jesus Christ the reliable God to trust in. God has been disclosed to us in this One Life of incomparable loveliness and power. "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" asked a great Hebrew seer. We look at that

spirit that lived in Jesus of Nazareth. We see that life "that went about doing good" in Galilee and Judæa, and that steadfastly faced toward the cross outside the great capital city's wall. We can answer the old, old question, "To whom then will ye liken God?" and, pointing to that Life and that Death, can say: "Here is the likeness of God. He who hath seen this hath seen God."

I stood one unforgettable night, at sundown, in the courtyard of the citadel that overlooks the city of Cairo. There below lay the ancient city on the Nile's alluvial plain. It was teeming with men and women. It was ignorant, unclean, and suffering. Since the dawn of civilization there had been there a city of men and women. It held within its bounds an epitome of the unutterable and immeasurable tragedy of the world's life. There it sprawled, with its exotic and colorful beauty of the Near East, till it was forced to pause by the imperious barrier of the desert. And towering there in the afterglow of the sunset on the edge of the boundless waste of sand stood the Pyramids and the Sphinx—unbelievably old, solemn witnesses of the long, immemorial pageant of human hope and despair, aspiration and defeat. I did not wonder that the old Sphinx excited out of a wise thinker

the question, "Is the universe friendly?" Where are we to go to get an answer to man's long and sorrow-touched questions? To whom shall we go for the words of eternal life? I went from that citadel courtyard down into the ancient city to meet the president of the great Christian university. I heard him tell of the work of the interpreters of Christian good will in the midst of this difficult part of the world's life. I heard him tell of the capacity for worth that life displays when once it is touched by the experience of the Christian purpose. I heard him tell of men and women committed to the cause of making Christ's redemptive love a felt and known reality in that old civilization. As I listened I had an answer to my question of that hour and the question of all hours: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." The Eternal God is the source of an awareness of a reliable purpose at the heart of things. The mind and heart of this God are disclosed in Jesus. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ! shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor

angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

From the eternal love of a reliable God to trust in we cannot be torn away.

CHAPTER IV

A PERSONAL CHRIST TO CONFIDE IN

THE longing to be reputable, the desire to secure the regard and confidence of men, must have sufficient foundation to make for validity and stability. And the larger the claim made upon our respect, the wider and deeper must be the structural undergirding. Christianity is tremendous in the exactions that it makes upon us, on our outlook upon life, on our loyalty to conviction. In turn we have the right to ask Christianity—and we have no right not to ask Christianity—"Who are you? Where do you come from? What is your validity for to-day?"

Consult the written records of religious history; consult the personal testimony of Jesus; consult the needs and requirements of our own human nature; consult the insight and experience of those who for one thousand nine hundred years have been leaders in the van of the world's life and progress; consult the needs and aspirations of the men and women of our day as they seek for a source of spiritual reality and moral dynamic. As a result

of the testimony of these five witnesses we find ourselves face to face with this most deeply significant fact of our time—the widespread conviction that Jesus of Nazareth must be dealt with in any adequate outlook upon life. Read the great literature of the race and you meet the ideas of Jesus. Try to think through the great problems of civilization and you find yourself dealing with the principles of Jesus. Study the attitudes of the world's most reflective and serious people and you discover a reverent attention toward the truths of Jesus. Deal with what you personally think to be right or wrong and you confront the ideals of Jesus. The fact is that in no aspect of life or experience can we avoid having something to do with this Jesus of Nazareth.

No problem before the human mind to-day carries greater importance than a right appreciation of the meaning of Jesus. That cultured Hindu had it right when he said to E. Stanley Jones: "There seems to be no one else seriously bidding for the heart of the world except Jesus Christ." Professor E. F. Scott has this to say as a preface to *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus:* "To-day, as never before, Jesus stands out as the moral leader of humanity. The principles which he laid down have been vindicated through the bitter expe-

riences of the last few years, and men of all opinions are now agreed that the society of the future can be securely built on no other foundation." Even Mahatma Gandhi, an avowed Hindu, has had to turn to Jesus' principle, "Love your enemies," in order to find a power superior to force in the struggle of his people toward their hopes and dreams of freedom. Certainly, no one would ever accuse Gamaliel Bradford of being an enthusiast for the evangelical type of Christianity, but in his book, *Life and I,* described by him as "an autobiography of humanity," he says, "Among all the varied agencies for disciplining the mutinous, rebellious, all-engrossing I, none probably has been more notable or more efficient than the life and teaching of Jesus." This statement is particularly interesting in the light of his own statement that he has "not read a chapter of the Bible continuously for over ten years." Even men trained and expert in many intellectual realms are often found to be strange victims of fancies and careless of facts when dealing with a sphere of interest outside of their particular major concern. Many times we discover men evaluating the life of Jesus without carefully facing the facts concerning him. This indirect approach to the life of Jesus is possible because, as

Emerson said: "The name of Jesus is not so much written as plowed into the history of the world."

In seeking for the validities and reliabilities of life we cannot avoid facing the fact of Jesus of Nazareth; for he is that—a fact, a life which has actually been lived in the story of the world's life, and which must be taken into consideration when we try to get at an interpretation of life. I do not see how we are going to avoid coming to grips with the fact of the life of Jesus. We have to do something with the fact of Jesus Christ. The simple thing I would plead for is that in our approach to Jesus Christ we keep ourselves close to the realm of fact.

Men of real distinction, such as Georg Brandes, the Danish literary critic, have said that the life of Jesus was a symbolic myth. There are people who will tell us that religion is the mere effulgence of our wishes, desires, and dreams, without facts to rest upon. Benedetto Croce, brilliant idealist philosopher, a Roman Catholic who has dismissed his church's religion but kept its tradition and taste for beauty, tells us outright that "religion is identical with myth," and that "philosophy is the true religion." It is his view that philosophy removes from religion all reason

for existing. Professor Santayana, one time of Harvard University, says that the strength of the Christian outlook is in the fact that "all its parts had some significance and poetic truth, although they contained or needed to contain nothing empirically real." With him, Christianity is a great poem picturing human destiny and translating the moral battle of man into beauty.

William Tell's Chapel stands in a picturesque spot on the shore of beautiful Lake Lucerne in Switzerland. The story of the famous archer who was ordered by the Austrian bailiff Gessler to shoot an apple from the head of his little son, his success, his arrest, imprisonment and escape, his great battle for Swiss freedom at Mortgarten in 1315, and his death in the rescue of a child from drowning in the Schachenbach, has been told and retold for six hundred years. The historical critics have long since discounted the facts of that story, and William Tell is now a legend, but the chapel still remains and the beautiful story is still told. There are many lovely things in life that are only fairy tales, and there are people who tell us that the Christian outlook is but the precipitation of our fancies and not the outcome of our facts; a castle of beautiful dreams, all the

more lovely because it comes out of wish and dream and does not rest upon fact and reality.

But we cannot find validity or reliability in a faith that is merely a comfortable dream. A magnificent poetic drama against a background of hopes and fears will not answer our deepest needs. When the hot flames of temptation sear and burn to the very centers of life, when great losses and tragic sorrows break the very foundations of life, when hard problems and disturbing perplexities stand across the very ways of life, we cannot find validity or confidence for living in aspiration or wish or dream. We need more than a symbol to meet the realities of our own experience with life. A giant forest oak must have more substantial soil for rootage than a fogbank.

The real need of our day is a religion which thoughtful men and women can hold to be valid and reliable because rooted and grounded in fact and truth. If the Christian outlook upon life is simply a defense mechanism against the raw horror of living, if it is simply a beautiful stained-glass window to throw light and color upon the brute struggle for existence, it would be the honest and brave thing to admit it, smash the window and face the raw horror with all its naked brutality. It is worth while to insist that the gospel

of Jesus not only deals with facts, but deals with the most amazing fact that ever happened on this planet—the fact of Jesus himself.

The very first thing that we must be sure of is our facts. If any reader is priding himself upon being scientific, saying that he will stick by the facts, I dare to assert there is nothing that we would rather have him do than stick by the facts—only we must have all the facts, and we must find the supreme facts.

Begin with the fact that Jesus was once an actual part of our human world, a living reality in the texture of history. We will not, as Gamaliel Bradford confesses he has done, neglect a careful study of the original records that tell of his life and career. The records of his life tell a vivid story of the world in which he lived. Here we see the simplicity and impressive power of this strange Man of Nazareth. Here we learn of his cause, what he said of it, what he did for it, what he suffered for it. Here we discover the sort of influence which he had over those who came to know him best. Here we find the truth that so held him that he could say, "I am the truth." It was the story of this life which, "nearly two thousand years ago, brought to

the Mediterranean world the greatest liberation of spirit that the world has ever known, conquering alike

> '. . . the glory that was Greece
> And the grandeur that was Rome,'

and finally bringing the whole living riches both of classic art and of classic philosophy to the feet of the Galilæan. It is this tale which has made our Europe and our West, softening the proud hearts of all our Northern races."

Historical science to-day is occupied in exhibiting with all possible accuracy, clearness, and vividness the environment, social, intellectual, moral, and religious, in which Jesus lived. The great devotion to historic research, which has characterized education during the past century, has given a more accurate picture of the Jesus of history than has been given to any previous generation of Christians since the earliest beginnings of the Christian enterprise. The little book *Toward the Understanding of Jesus,* by Vladimir G. Simkhovitch, is a type of work that has come out of a careful study of the actual environment in which Jesus lived and did his work. We cannot come to an appreciation of Jesus without looking at the world of which he was a part.

He actually lived in a particular country, at a particular time in the story of the world's life.

History has never seen a more unlikely candidate for universal fame than this young carpenter of Nazareth. His race was the Hebrew race, and for a thousand years the Jew had been a despised man. His province was Galilee, and Galilee was a land of mongrel people. His town was Nazareth, that drew the camp-followers of the Roman legions, and that merited the world's sneer, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" His trade was that of a village carpenter, which meant the denial of the opportunity for education. His years were thirty-three, and he died before he had a chance to write a book or formulate a philosophy. Now nineteen centuries have come and gone, and the one Person who is capturing the attention of the modern world is Jesus.

J. Middleton Murry is one of the foremost literary critics of our time, the editor of the London Athenæum. He writes his *Jesus, Man of Genius,* because, as he says, he one day awoke to the realization that he had come to middle life, to a place of influence, and yet had never made up his mind as to the most powerful force that had ever operated in human his-

tory. We cannot escape this fact of Jesus who was actually born into our world, who lived in it, and who still is such a potent influence that he must be dealt with.

It is significant that in every realm of human interest the spirit of Jesus is making itself felt. In our international relations we confess that only his spirit can curb civilization's mania for the suicide that we call war. In our social relations we learn that only his spirit is competent actually to build an economic order that will clothe the poor, feed the hungry, heal the sick, and minister to those who need. In our personal relations we discover new insights through the tools of modern psychology in sayings like "All things are possible to him that believeth" and "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

E. Stanley Jones, who has looked closely into the heart of the non-Christian world, says: "Nowhere except in Jesus Christ does life seem to catch its rhythm, its harmony, its way to live. . . . The future of religion is bound up with this Man. If we cannot be religious after the mind and spirit of Christ, we cannot be religious at all." J. Middleton Murry looks at this Jesus and translates him into the terms of literary criticism. Bruce Barton deals with this Jesus and exploits him

in the reactions of American business. Giovanni Papini sees this Jesus and pictures him in the color of Italian romanticism and Latin faith. The point is that our modern world is trying to find a setting for Jesus and an interpretation of him.

Our day is far removed in time from Jesus, but never did a day try harder to get closer to him. To-day—our disillusioned and wistful to-day—as it looks out upon the world, sometimes luminous and lovely and other times dark and terrible, needs to see that to-morrow has meaning because we have a personal Christ to confide in as the redemptive hope of the world's life.

Yet the fact is that Jesus came into the world's life; and the world not only refused him a place, it mobbed him to a criminal's death. Let us not be surprised. The failure of each generation to recognize its wisest teacher is proverbial. Of the greatest men who have ever lived we can only say that they have been neglected in their youth, hated in their manhood, and broken in their age. This is instanced in the beheading of John in Jerusalem; the poisoning of Socrates in Athens; the burning of Savonarola in Florence; the martyrdom of Huss in Prague.

We ought not to be surprised, therefore,

that Jesus was misunderstood. There is a page in the Gospel of Mark, too intimately tragic to have been invented, telling how his own immediate family, hearing of the amazing life that he was living, went out to bring him home; for they said: "He is beside himself." They thought that he was insane—stark crazy! Neither should we be surprised that Jesus was maligned. When his questioners could not answer his arguments, in baffled irritation they lifted stones to hurl at him till he was obliged to withdraw. Nor should we be surprised that Jesus was finally mobbed to death. The militarists were disappointed in Jesus: he refused to lead an army. The politicians were disappointed: he declined the throne. The scholars were disappointed: he did not write poetry like Homer, nor polish a philosophy like Plato. The reformers were disappointed: he thought meanness of spirit more terrible than poverty of body. The Stoics were irritated: he was not an ascetic. The Epicureans were angry: he ignored physical pleasures. The Pharisees were dismayed: he discounted ritual observances.

Jesus came into the world, meeting every one of the experiences of the world's life, interpreting its powers, its meaning, and its purpose; yet the world did not comprehend him.

He came to the things that were his own, and his own people gave him no appreciation. In view of these facts, might not one expect this Jesus to be dead and by the world forgotten? Clement Wood writes of "The Singing Saviours":

"'Dead men tell no tales!' they chuckled,
As the singing saviours died,
A few serene, the many shackled,
Scourged, tortured, crucified.

"'Dead men tell no tales'—Is Shelley
Dust blown dumbly o'er the ground?
Are Keats and Burns silenced wholly?
Do Milton's still lips give no sound?

"Is Shakespeare voiceless, Dante tongueless?
And, in this black protesting year,
Is the dead Jesus wordless, songless?
Listen—They are all that you can hear!"

Among these living voices, Jesus speaks still the words of eternal life. "To whom shall we go," if not to him?

We have the fact of the life of Jesus to deal with. Now, a fact in and of itself is without meaning until some insight gives us its value or significance. Multitudes of apples fell from trees every autumn of the year long ages before Newton came on the scene; but not until he came did anyone see the meaning or the

significance of that commonplace fact. But Newton saw it in one apple. The fact of one falling apple gave him the meaning of a whole universe held in the sway of gravitation. Through all the æons of time this earth of ours has been swinging around the sun; but not until Copernicus came did anyone see accurately the sun as the center of our solar system with our earth and the planets moving in separate orbits around the sun. But Copernicus saw it as he measured the movements of the stars.

When we look at all the facts of life and experience we cannot escape dealing with the fact of the life of Jesus Christ. It is not difficult to look at the vast and hideous contradictions of life and conclude that this is the worst possible of worlds. Evil is rampant. Crime is everywhere. Defeat of our finest hopes is common. Here a loving mother is touched with a virulent bacillus and death enters. Here a consecrated missionary doctor is balked by a plague that devastates a whole countryside. Here a lofty patriot, devoted to his country, is frustrated by a raiding profiteer. What can be said about a world so full of such amazing contradictions? Into this kind of a world on one far-away Bethlehem night came Jesus.

Whatever else the storm and stress of the long centuries have taken or left, nothing can annul the fundamental historic fact of Jesus Christ. The very fact that this world cradled the life of Jesus moves us to ask the meaning of the fact. One thing that man will not believe, when he is thinking sanely and accurately, is that the low, the mean, and the cynical have arrived at the right answer to the meaning of life; and that the high, the fine, and the noble have failed in their handling of the facts of life. That is the way of ultimate madness and the destruction of every abiding value.

We can never come toward a real understanding of Jesus by merely becoming acquainted with the world that he came into and the historic fact of his life in that world. The record of the life of Jesus comes to us through the story of the Gospels, and that life of Jesus becomes real to us as our intellectual and moral attitude toward that life and its record is characterized by reality. The secret of the personal Christ has never been found by anyone until the historic Jesus has become light in the mind, love in the heart, and triumphant moral power in the will.

Near my home is a beautiful body of water with a walk encircling it, an inviting and de-

lightful place for strolling. One evening I was out on that walk with a ten-year-old lad. The evening star shone large and bright, doubling itself in the calm water. The little fellow began talking about the star. I thought it a good time to tell him about the immensity of the universe and began to instruct him concerning the remoteness of that star, how its light traveled and the long time it took to reach us. He gazed at the star, watched its reflection in the water, and then commented: "Well, what of it? The light is here now!" A child's mind has a way of grasping the essential fact.

It is not of most importance to us to have the historic explanation of Jesus, but to have the insight that will personally appropriate him. For he took all the contradictions of life and held them in a unity of devotion for his Father God, the God and Father of all men. He was closely identified with us, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, "in all points tempted as we are." He knew, by repeated passionate experiences, the difficulties and contradictions and defeats that shadow our human experience. He shared to the full the human lot. He wept and loved, lived a life that felt the sting of defeat, and at last died the death of the cross.

The real credential of Jesus is not found in history as a mere recital of event, but in living experience as a disclosure of living purpose. It is through the insight of those men and women in whom he has become life, abundant life, faith, hope, joy, a new and triumphant spirit that he has been found. Samuel Johnson once said: "Testimony is like an arrow shot from a long bow; the force of it depends on the strength of the hand that draws it." We cannot get at reality from the one who sees truth as a mirage; we can only get it from the one who has it as a possession. We ask of those who know life at its best and highest and noblest for testimony concerning Jesus. It is as men and women have entered the mind of Christ and discovered the realities of life in the terms of his understanding and his devotion and his purpose that they have come actually to know him as the personal Christ to confide in. The experience of the Christian purpose is the avenue to knowledge of Jesus.

How do we know George Washington and Abraham Lincoln? In the American story the two lives that are most often in intimate and significant fellowship are those of Washington and Lincoln. Endlessly unlike, they are also profoundly similar. We do not know Wash-

ington simply by our ability to get hold of the facts of his life as a great soldier and a great statesman. We do not come to really know him when our journalese biographers point out the flaws and limitations of his character. When we see that Washington did something of durable significance for the country, that he brought a moral dignity of abiding value to the service of the republic, that that something of lifting power touches our lives permanently, then in a real way we come to an appreciation of the lasting worth of Washington. To come into intimate fellowship with the purpose of Washington is to come to know the moral dignity of the man himself. It is a sharing of the fundamental personality and power of the man that acquaints us with him.

We know Lincoln not by our ability to recite the romance of Lincoln's life—born in a log cabin, reared in the wilderness, studied law, elevated to the Presidency, lifted by the apocalypse of fire and pain to a universal immortality. Only when we see that Lincoln did something of tremendous consequence for the life of this nation, that he heard the cry for honor, for justice, for kindness, and that he heeded that cry, do we come to appreciate the sympathetic insight that is the fountain out

of which came the world character of Lincoln. To feel the forces of sympathy that moved in the soul of Lincoln is to come to know the lofty beauty of the man himself. To share in the purpose of Lincoln is really to know him.

Whatever we touch of real human living testifies that the things which master us and move us must be incarnate, made real in flesh and blood. We believe in a thing when we believe in the person who becomes its expression and interpretation. There is no demonstration like the demonstration of life. When a man sends his ideas to the front and keeps himself in the rear, we believe neither in him nor his ideas. But when his courage gives his ideas propulsion and his devotion is their living power, then other men leap to follow him and count it their joy to live and work with the man who believes in the truth which has made him, and who has been made by the truth in which he believes.

Assuredly, the processes of reason are indispensable in any valid and reliable program of life. We follow them as we ought from step to step; but in the end we follow with high-hearted courage and sacrificial devotion, the person who is so possessed of the truth which is his, and to which he belongs, that he becomes its living voice, its splendid power,

and incarnate presence. Washington and Lincoln live in the American story because they incarnate for us what we know the nation must have if it is to live abundantly and genuinely.

Our truth must be made incarnate, not only because life is the best demonstration and passion the best logic, but because truth once made incarnate is stated in terms which are forever understandable. Life speaks a language that is universal, a language that all men can understand. We do not know Jesus of Nazareth simply by our ability to get into correct sequence the facts in the Bible concerning his life. The highest value of the Bible is that it gives to us an introduction to the personal Christ. We need to learn to use the Bible, not as a finality but as a great highway leading toward finality, and that one finality is the personal Christ.

This volume that we call the Bible is tremendously manifold. It covers every kind of warning and encouragement, it brings to view every aspect of character and quality of life, it includes every species of truth and teaching. Too often we find ourselves stopping and permanently staying in one spot or area of the Bible as though we had reached a destination instead of using the whole volume as a high-

way to bring us to the intended destination—a personal Christ to confide in.

Like entering a forest path that leads to our journey's end, but coming upon some enchanting glade we pitch our tent and forget the journey's end, so are we sometimes guilty of treading the paths that lead to Christ. We find something that fascinates us; it gets hold of us and we then and there pitch camp and let the Christ destination go. That is the reason that we Christians move in such broken and scattered ranks, although the Bible has the one high purpose—to be a highway bringing us personally into the presence of Christ. We think more of what we find on the way than we do of what we profess to be seeking at the end of the way. That is why Christians split up into creeds and why the church crumbles up into denominations.

A Methodist may be so enamored of his ecclesiastical polity as to camp on it and forget that the only value any ecclesiastical polity can have is to keep the world moving toward Christ. So with the Baptist and his independence, the Episcopalian and his priestly succession, the Catholic and his infallibilities. There is no difference in us in this respect! We forget to keep on going through the woods because we like what we

find in the woods, and the woods becomes full of Christians—"babes lost in the woods"—and Christ—well,

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.

"When Death and Shame would woo him last,
From under the trees they drew him last,
'Twas on a tree they slew him last,
When out of the woods he came."

And he still waits for you and for me to really find him and know him as the personal Christ to confide in.

Everything related to our Christian outlook is central in Christ. All the divergent rays of light that stream out upon us from the Bible are seen to point to one luminous center, Jesus Christ, from whom they have radiated, just as all the colors and manifold shades of color that paint the sky, cloud, foliage, and sea with such prodigality of various beauty are only diverse utterances of light from the sun.

The personal Christ is the light that shines out upon all the reaches of human society. He holds before our eyes the valid ideals of common life. He interprets the meanings of human fellowship and touches with absolute mastery the laws of social redemption. He

gathers up the little broken lines of human endeavor and shows them converging as the paths of empire upon the capital city of God. He brings to us our sense of God's Fatherhood, our awareness of his love, our consciousness of his comradeship, our certainty in the everlasting, our conviction of the holy meaning of our own lives.

More than all else we need to come really to know him who has incarnated for us the highest and best and noblest that life has to offer. All the manifold revelations that he made of himself, all the particular words that he spoke, all the deeds of gentleness he performed, all the strokes of holiness he delivered, all the works of love he wrought are so many separate lines in the delineation of his mighty personality.

When we see that this Jesus of history did something for the humanity of man, something that no other had done before or has done since, something that has added to the imperishable value of life, something of such eternal significance that the whole story and experience of the world's life has taken a different turn because of him, then the Christ of experience lives for us. And more intimately still, when the personal Christ opens our insight toward the Eternal, makes us

aware of the touch of God upon our lives, comes to us in our battle for moral supremacy and gives us the re-enforcement that we need to triumph in the fight, then do we really know him.

There are thousands of men and women who would say to us if they could become articulate and give expression to their faith: "I know Christ, because he has shown me how to live and given me the power to live. I know Christ because he has brought to me a sense of the moral dignity of life. I know Christ because he has given me a sympathy with the needs of struggling and aspiring men. I know Christ because he has taken the liar out of me and made me trust in an inner genuineness. I know Christ because his insight and disclosure have become a part of my passion and purpose. I know Christ because in him I have found that redemptive dynamic that gives a motive big enough to make life worth living."

Robert Browning, one of the two greatest poets of the Victorian period, put his testimony by saying:

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the world, and out of it,
And hath so far advanced thee to be wise."

Vachel Lindsay, a modern combination of missionary and minstrel, gives this witness:

> "This is our faith tremendous—
> Our wild hope, who shall scorn—
> That in the name of Jesus,
> The world shall be reborn!"

Probably one among a half dozen of the greatest intellects in the world to-day is Albert Schweitzer. Twenty years ago he had come into eminence as one of the world's great historical philosophers. He was already one of the world's great organists, and its finest interpreter of Bach. It was almost incredible that this man should abandon his place in the world of literature and music and take up the study of medicine and surgery in order to become a missionary in Central Africa. But Jesus had done something so tremendously real to him that he had to take him into vital consideration in his plan for life. So into the African bush he went. Every few years he comes out of the African bush to give organ recitals in great European cities, or to give lectures in philosophy in great old universities like Oxford, in order to get funds to carry on his hospital in the heart of darkest Africa. He says that he knows his Lord Jesus and that Jesus sent him to that far-away place.

What does he mean when he says this? Let him answer for himself: "He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, he came to those men who knew him not. He speaks to us the same words: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which he has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey him, whether they be wise or simple, he will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings, which they shall pass through in his fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who he is."

Said a young university student in one of our Round Table discussions in Baltimore, "I simply can't take anyone else's interpretation of Jesus." And I said to that fine young fellow: "Good! You have made the first long step in coming to know him." In our own experience we learn who he is. When we take the truth into life and incarnate it with our purpose and devotion it ceases to be abstract. Then it is that the truth sets us free, liberates us from barren bondage, and gives us an abiding sense of security. Life loses its solitariness and finds itself in fellowship with Him who can give satisfaction to every range of hope and aspiration. The fact is, we either turn to Jesus and take his reading of life, or

we turn away from his interpretation of the world.

If we do not take Jesus' way of life, we must take something else, and less. No person can escape decision here, and whether life is to achieve its full value and worth depends upon whether or not one comes to know a personal Christ to confide in. Jesus Christ holds the adequate resources of redemptive love and understanding sympathy to meet the needs of every life. If we would know the personal Christ to confide in, we must give him our devotion and consecration.

"Not what, but whom I do believe,
That, in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed
To mortal man may give.

"Not what, but whom!
For Christ is more than all the creeds,
And his full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds survive.

"Not what I do believe, but whom!
Who walks beside me in my gloom?
Who shares the burden wearisome?
Who all the dim way doth illume,
And bids me look beyond the tomb
The larger life to live?
Not what I do believe, but whom!"

CHAPTER V

A LIBERATED LIFE TO GLORY IN

We are being told from many quarters that religion is a binding and imprisoning influence. Saloman Reinach, a distinguished French anthropologist of Hebrew birth, has said that religion is "a collection of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties." This is one of those oversimplified definitions that becomes a sort of slogan to advertise the protest of a man's spirit against the bondage of some hard-and-fast tradition.

It would be an interesting field of study to delve into the personal backgrounds of those interpreters of religion who find in it only those elements that "cabin, crib, and confine" the soul of man. It would add to our understanding if we could see the conditioning environment of the bright Ph.D.'s who speak after the fashion of a professor of philosophy in one of our State universities, who seems sure that theistic religion is a "dead-weight of inhibitions which has kept the human spirit under bonds to past attitudes and methods." A liberated life to glory in will come, he de-

clares, when "the last bulwark of supernaturalism will have fallen. Man will be forced to acknowledge that he is an earth-child whose drama has meaning only upon her bosom." It is worth while to recall Bacon's saying that "slight tastes of philosophy may perchance move one to atheism, but fuller draughts lead back to religion." We are so built that we have a deep and insatiable curiosity to know what life is for and what are its enduring satisfactions.

Religion, in all its variant expressions, has meaning when we see it as man's effort to win security and liberty for his life. Here is man pitted against his environing universe that in the end seems to annihilate him in death. Here is man lifting a faith out of his struggling personality for that quality of life that will assure security and liberty.

Wherever you get human nature you get religion, you get man reaching out for that life that is indestructible. David S. Cairns, one of Scotland's keenest modern thinkers, says: "Religion is, fundamentally, on the human side, man's protest and appeal to the Supreme against the sorrows, indignities, and sins of this present world. It is the endeavor of man, through that appeal to unite himself with the life of that unseen and ruling world,

and so to win the power from it to dominate and transmute the life of time."

Written in the mind and heart of normal men everywhere is the instinct to worship. Somewhere every man sends his thoughts out into the invisible with the expectancy of finding some larger meaning or finer satisfaction out of his universe. I am not unaware of the vast numbers of people who live as though they had no interest in anything beyond that which is immediately near at hand. But even those horrible gods of modern paganism called Sport, Speed, and Splendor have meaning when we see them as symbols of the desire to break away from monotony with the hope of catching a glimpse of some bigger world that haunts the fringes of narrow circumstance.

The rise in our contemporary life of the religion of Humanism testifies to the imperialism of the heart. The humanist wants to feel completely at home in this world. Feeling his limitation in the mystery of the universe, he stands erect to meet it with the prayer, "I thank whatever gods there be for my unconquerable soul."

The presence of multitudinous cults in our modern city society witnesses to the need of spiritual life preservers. Endeavoring to build a civilization of comfort, modern man does not

find sanitary plumbing, automatic heating, automobiles, and country clubs giving him enduring satisfactions. Fears within and foes without make him feel himself an alien in his universe, and so he seeks the dividends of religion without the discipline of devotion.

If some sort of a religion appears to be a necessity, growing out of man's normal relationship to his world, it follows, logically, that the best and finest religion is life's supreme necessity. The highest ideals of mankind, the noblest insights of man into his universe, the best interpretations that the race has reached, cannot long remain matters of indifference. We are not dealing with the mere subjective dream and glory that is enshrined in the human story; we are concerned with the supreme paths along which the desire of all nations is realized—an understanding and reconciliation with the universe that will assure to us both security and liberty.

The rebel mood toward the Infinite is destructive of the best humanity. It is the rock of dishonesty that sinks the man who fails to take in all the high truth about the nature of man. The liberty which is license comes to wreckage because it has never learned that our universe is really a vast empire knitted together by laws. The mood of

indifference by a less violent process comes to the same thing. An easy-going neglect of the highest elements of man's nature will bring an atrophy of the soul. The normal attitude, the everlasting reality, the essential humanity of the religious need, is given in the words of the Hebrew psalm:

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

There is in man an immediate relation to the Highest. The awareness of that relation is the beginning of religion. Religion grows out of man's need for security and his demand for liberty. In the midst of a wide-lying universe with all of its problems and portents man feels the need of security. In a remarkable way man has reached out into the world about him and gained a good degree of control over it. This control over the physical universe around us was brought out in an "Intelligence Test" given to a group of eight and nine-year-old school children in Baltimore this winter. Here are three of the questions and their answers:

1. *Question:* If you were left in a room alone and it should grow dark, what would you do?

Answer: I would push on the light.

2. *Question:* If you were on your way home from school and it should begin to rain and you were without your rubbers, what would you do?

Answer: I would call a taxi.

3. *Question:* If you were at home alone and you should get lonesome, what would you do?

Answer: I would turn on the radio.

Even our children have a vast control over physical energies.

The scientific spirit has added enormously to man's sense of security. In realm after realm difficulties and limitations that have hampered and interfered with man have been conquered. The earth, the sea, and the air have been subjected to the control of man. But it is not merely that man has been able to use the energies and potencies of his world. In exploring the stellar universe, in discovering the laws of the world, in investigating the history of the earth, and in speculating upon the genesis and development of life, science has been finding and clearing new continents for religious faith. The scientific spirit has made it possible for man to remove many of

the external obstacles to liberty. Through the achievements of science, nature and spirit understand each other as never before. Man calls with new confidence and the universe answers with a new depth of meaning. In the answerableness of man and nature to each other, in the intelligence of man and the intelligibleness of nature, a deep basis is laid for a sense of security.

So far as outward life is concerned this very sense of security has contributed to a widening of the domain of liberty. We have seen accepted standards criticized and overturned, venerable customs questioned and abandoned. The element of security that has come from man's control over his outer world has developed a spirit of self-reliance that has in many quarters pushed over into revolt and anarchy.

The satisfaction of man's wants and desires has greatly increased with the march of man's control over the outer world. Could you by a wish have what you would—past, present and future—in one immediate now, what would you select? I recall a half-forgotten tale of a man who dreamed the choice was his and he chose a paradise in which every desire was anticipated and fulfilled. He longed for a palace and it was his. He asked

a banquet and it was spread. He desired the best society and it came at his call, and held delightful converse with him. Months passed, the pleasures began to pall. He had no pain, no grief, no dismay, no denied request. When he chafed in his gilded bondage and said, "I am weary of heaven," the attendant Spirit answered, "You are not in heaven, you are in hell!"

Whatever withers the soul is hell; whatever liberates and ennobles it is its true heaven. Do we find ourselves in revolt against custom and convention? Are we trying to reach out into the unknown and find for ourselves a liberty of thought and action? Perhaps we are in rebellion against the limitations and want of our own days or those of others? If that attitude makes us more understanding and sympathetic, the evil we lament becomes our good. We may see that only as an economic security is ours can we have that liberty that we desire. So we determine to bend every effort to secure what we call the goods of life. But if their possession makes us grasping and greedy, our security will imprison us rather than free us. There is a strict relativity between what we are and what we have. The worth of our possessions is determined by the inner attitude of our lives.

The inner obstacles to the liberated life are just as formidable as those that arise out of the outer environment. Our real need is not for a new environment, but a new self. The very disappearance of external authority makes internal control imperative. If authority disappears as external restraint, it must appear as internal constraint. If authority is lost as external coercion, it must be found as internal aspiration. If the law of life is no longer written upon the tables of stone, it must be graven upon the tables of the heart. Paul understood this when he said: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The great meaning of Jesus is that he brings to us a larger life of both security and liberty. He has come that we "might have life and . . . have it more abundantly"—life to the full with overflowing vitality!

Jesus came into the world to emancipate men—to give men a liberated life to glory in. The supremacy of Jesus as the world's Master-Teacher rests upon the verdict of life. For Jesus life is good. Our human world, in his sight, is great, valuable, full of illimitable promise. He understands the men who seek, who knock, and he declares that there are answers to questions and opening doors into the kingdom of truth. He lives, he dies, that

his kingdom of truth may come. His kingdom is supremely concerned with the redemption and liberating of life. Jesus looks upon life as a gift to be valued and conserved. It is divine in its meaning. His aim is to redeem it from abuse and to fill it with the grace that consecrates and completes it.

The Buddhist pleads for a liberated life; but with him the experience of living is misery, and his ideal is the beatitude of extinction. The final emancipation is in Nirvana, the annihilation of every desire. A Hindu writes to E. Stanley Jones: "When one comes into that Nirvana state, where no mood exerts any influence on him, the Jiva (lower life) unites with the Supreme Divinity and they are one. Then he is in that stage which is *sans* care, *sans* thought, *sans* everything, where pure essence only prevails." Here the way to a liberated life is not through the expression of personality but through its suppression. This is why there has been a vast paralysis upon Oriental civilization.

It is not without its significance that the new leadership that is speaking for a liberation of the East declares that its inspiration is found in Jesus Christ. Mahatma Ghandi, loyal to the Hindu tradition, nevertheless declares that it is from the teachings of Jesus

that he finds guidance. The only way that Christianity can be finally rejected is by a final denial of the will to live. Universal pessimism that will seek to build on the foundation of unyielding despair is the only ultimate outlook that can succeed in defeating the gospel of Christ. Because the desire for life is deep and ineradicable, more and more the world must turn to Jesus.

Victorious and passionately aspiring life cannot for long rest under the shadow of a pessimistic gospel. The ultimate leader for an aspiring humanity is He who came to give the more abundant life. Jesus identifies his whole cause with life. He has an insatiable interest in things and people. He lifts the whole business of living into the very heart of God. As healer, as interpreter, as prophet, his whole power is directed upon the human pageant of life to turn it into a vast and vital joy. Wherever the instinct of life is imprisoned, there he is found as the supreme deliverer. Wherever the desire for life prevails, there he is recognized as the right Master. When humanity rises into the desire for the highest kind of life, there it chooses as its Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus took his stand in the stream of life and ventured his cause upon the living power of truth to liberate the human spirit. Truth is a

living thing that cares for itself because it is instinct with God.

We have been reluctant to take Jesus seriously when he says to us, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." We have been afraid to believe that the Christian reading of the world of life is a true interpretation of what is fact. "The truth shall make you free"—actually liberate you. Truth is a loyalty to fact, devotion to what is real, agreement with the actual. This never narrows life or binds the mind or imprisons the spirit.

It is the verdict of those who have lived most vitally—the poets, the prophets, the seers—that Jesus is right; truth sets free, emancipates, liberates. John C. Calhoun said of Daniel Webster, his great antagonist in the field of constitutional law, "Show him a fact in the path of his argument, and Mr. Webster is dumb." An inner genuineness faces facts and wins an intellectual accuracy and moral integrity. The habit of the exact mind and genuine spirit is needed to dissolve the vast compound of fact and fancy, truth and opinion, that in every field of human interest comes to us with the label of knowledge.

The gospel of Jesus is a report on our world of life. Is it a genuinely accurate report?

Our day is subjecting the inherited intellectual and moral possessions of the world's life to the severest examinations. We believe with Socrates that the unexamined life is not worth living. Christianity and the records of Christianity are being constantly brought to the test of life. It is of infinite significance that the records of Jesus shall prove to be an essentially accurate transcript of his mind and spirit. Let Edwin Lewis, of Drew University, speak for the best scholarship at this point: "The evidence to the historicity of Jesus is simply overwhelming. The Gospels themselves are historical documents with a pedigree at least equally unimpeachable with that of other documents whose general reliability has never been called in question."

But we still face the question as to whether the interpretation and gospel of Jesus represents the truth as an agreement of thought and fact. For many, many centuries the world's best thought carried a picture of the universe most clearly formulated by Ptolemy. The earth was the center of the universe surrounded by the firmament in which shone the sun by day and the moon and stars by night. Then came Copernicus, who carried in his mind another picture. For him the sun was the center of the universe, and the earth and

its sister planets moved in separate orbits around the sun. This interpretation we still believe represents the truth as an agreement of thought and fact. There is the story of Rome across the years of its growth, power, and decline; here is the portrait that Gibbon has fastened in the pages of his mighty record. There is the moral and social constitution of man in the framework of the early flowering of Greek civilization; here is the Republic of Plato that pictures the philosopher's hope and ideal. There is the little land of Palestine as a setting for the total spiritual order of the universe; here is the mind of Christ and his reading of "the eternal life lived in time, under the eyes, and by the strength of God." Where the mind's picture and the present fact, the human insight and the eternal order, the interior world of thought and the exterior world of nature agree, there we say is the truth. When we read the report of Jesus, do we have an accurate reading, a true picture of what is real in our world of life?

Jesus used parables as his favorite method of communicating his interpretation of what is real about this universe. They combine utmost simplicity of narrative with deepest and utmost truth. When we read the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost

Son, when we see that shepherd out searching for the one missing lamb, when we watch that poor woman resolutely ransacking her house for that coin that is out of circulation, when we look at that father waiting for his son "to come to himself" and return home—when we see that these "World's Greatest Short Stories" turn on the idea that the owner in each case seeks his own and will not cease to seek it until he finds it, and then learn that this is the feeling of Jesus toward humanity that is lost in the mazes of this world, we are ready to ask the question: Is this the way that God feels and acts toward men? Do we have here an accurate and genuine picture of the God that lives at the heart of things? Has Jesus given us here a picture that is in essential agreement with the mind and heart of God? If this is a correct transcription of fact, the parable is true: it is a disclosure of the spirit of the Eternal God. In this same way we may value all perceptions and memories, all beliefs and faiths. If they are an accurate and genuine picture of the order beyond them, they are true. If they do not portray correctly that order of life, they are false. Here truth means reality, uncoerced by the will or desire of man.

Inner genuineness is a necessary ingredient,

but it is not sufficient. We live and move and have our being in an order of life and nature, independent of human will and desire. Man can plot the march of the times and seasons, the days and the years; but he cannot regulate them. This world, after all, belongs to God. The scientific spirit endeavors to come to an understanding of the world of nature and use its powers and energies for the enrichment of life. It is bringing to us constantly a revelation of the physical world of nature. The Christian evangel endeavors to come to an appreciation of the moral and spiritual world of man and use its potencies and powers for the enfranchisement of life. The teaching of Jesus is infinitely productive because it is a disclosure of the moral and spiritual life of man.

An inner genuineness may characterize our thought and feeling. The content of one's mind and the intent of one's heart may be marked by high sincerity, but this will not save one, if one is not living in accord with the order of the world. The law of gravitation is independent of man. It exists and operates whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. The somnambulist who walks out of his window on the fourth story of his house meets the same fate as the deliberate suicide.

"How shall they grasp Thy glory who despise
The law that is Thy kingdom here on earth,
Our way of freedom, and our path to Thee?
How shall they grasp that law, or rightly know
One truth in Nature, who deny Thy Power
Unresting and unhasting, everywhere."

There is a world-order and its laws that must be honored. Its laws are not to bind us in slavery but to bring us emancipation of life.

Jesus concluded his Sermon on the Mount with the story of the Two Builders. Jesus never left truth hanging in the air as something remote from life, an abstract principle merely to be looked at. The sensible man built his house on rock. The stupid man built his house on sand. To the external eye both houses were good and adequate houses. The foolish builder was just as sincere as the wise builder. He too wanted life, home, freedom, for the rich content of existence. He built sincerely, but he did not take all the factors of life into consideration. He did not build in accordance with the order of life of which he was a part. He forgot that he was living in a searching universe. He forgot that in house-building one must build upon a solid basis. He made no provision against the rains that descended, the floods that came, the winds that blew. His house fell, not because

the man was not a man of inner genuineness, but because he had built a house that did not correspond to the demands and necessities of life. His house fell, not because it was insincerely built, but because it was foolishly built. His house fell, not because it was a wicked thing, but because it was not founded upon reality.

We live in a universe of utmost seriousness. Law in the realm of nature and in the sphere of the spirit is the ultimate way to a liberated life. Good intentions cannot bring immunity from disaster. It is true that "hell is paved with good intentions." It is the reverent and devout recognition of the inviolable and independent order of God without and within that alone can give to man a free and secure existence, a liberated life to glory in.

"The laws of nature shine like roads,
Firm roads that lead through a significant world
Not downward, from the greater to the less,
But up to the consummate soul of all."

When Jesus declared, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," he uttered words that are either sheer nonsense or he disclosed the way to what all the world is seeking. The truth of Christianity is valu-

able for what it gets itself made into. Its worth is not in its beauty on the pages of Scripture. Its value is not in its reasonableness in a correct and perfect creed. The truth of Christianity becomes an emancipating power in men only when it has been so taken up and absorbed by the life's faculty of appropriation as to become an actual and inseparable ingredient of life personally.

There are people for whom there exists no other relation between themselves and what they call their Christianity than that which exists between their bodies and the clothes they wear. The clothes may fit, but they are an external fit. They may be removed and exchanged to meet whatever exigencies may arise—change of weather or altered environment. I once asked a man how he could reconcile the truth of Christianity, which he professed to believe, with his daily actions. He replied that he did not try to reconcile them, but kept them as far apart as he possibly could.

The genius of Christianity is that it not only brings truth; it also supplies the power of realization. This is the deepest need of our natures: the need of getting truth so incarnated in our experience that it will liberate life. The lines of the Greek poet tell the tale:

"Oft have I lain awake at night and thought
Whence come the evils of this mortal life;
And my creed is that not through lack of wit
Men go astray, for most of them have sense
Sufficient, but that we must look elsewhere.
Discourse of reason tells us what is right,
But we fall short in action."

A knowledge of truth does not guarantee a truthful action. A correct creed does not always carry with it a fine character. Ideals, even when they are characterized by an inner genuineness, are very different from realization. Many a man who has a clear insight into the heart of duty does not possess the power of obedience.

The clear word of Jesus is, "If any man would know, let him do the will." The pathway to moral and spiritual certainty is the way of obedience to our highest and best insights. If we turn and look at the men who have failed in obedience, at Judas in his remorse, at Pilate washing his hands, at Richard III in his tent before the battle, at Lady Macbeth and the irremovable spots upon her hands, we discern the reality of the moral nature of man. Nor can we escape the same insight if we look at man's efforts at social and corporate living. The government of our great cities is admirable upon paper, but in

fact it is one of the scandals of the civilized world. The abstract, constitutional, paper creed of Chicago is perhaps splendid. But the embodiment of that creed in municipal administration is a matter that even the most patriotic Chicagoan has a hard time to put up with. Every loyal American believes that he lives under the best government on the earth. But he does not need to be unusually well versed in the history of politics and the conduct of public service to feel how immeasurably below the ideal is the actual fulfillment. This discrepancy between personal, municipal, and national creed and performance does not grow out of insincerity and hypocrisy. The fact of the matter is, personal righteous living is a difficult task; the high and fine administration of the business of a great city is a perplexing problem; and the wise and beneficent control of the interests of a mighty nation is a tremendous tax upon the resources of human nature.

Our need is for power, a moral and spiritual dynamic. The power that reaches and renews the heart is the liberating truth of the living God through Jesus Christ. The personality of Jesus Christ is the form for the coming of the moral and spiritual power of the Infinite. It is this power that men need for personal

conduct, domestic good will, national righteousness, and victorious humanity. Jesus spoke accurately and profoundly when he said: "I am the truth." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Truth is a disclosure of the moral and spiritual order of our human world and universe. It is not freedom to break from the path that leads from the plain to the mountain top; it is madness to dash carelessly across the ravine and crevasse. It is not freedom for the navigator to steer his ship from the charted ocean lanes clear of icebergs and shoals into the uncharted sea; it is a criminal mistake to sail a great ocean leviathan without obedience to the law of the sea. It is not freedom to do as one pleases. It is not a liberated life to run in the courses of crime, vice, and blasphemy; it is to run against the disclosure of God.

We look to Jesus and we see in him the truth about life and the universe. He is the highest truth about all that we need for competent living. We follow him! We are not tied and bound as we face the problems of living, because Jesus releases the deepest energies of our lives. We know whose we are and whom we serve. In the spirit of Jesus we find liberty, joyous and creative freedom.

When we come to know Jesus, he strikes down into the roots of our character, and we learn the secret of a liberated life to glory in.

"Lord, not for light in darkness do we pray,
Nor that the veil be lifted from our eyes,
Nor that the slow ascension of our day
Be otherwise.

. . . . . .

"We know the paths wherein our feet should press,
Across our hearts are written thy decrees;
Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless
With more than these.

"Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labor as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,
To strike the blow.

"Knowledge we ask not—knowledge thou hast lent—
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need—
Give us to build, above the deep intent,
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